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How many Sermons have been preached & printed calculated to undermine the real Truth & to encourage Error Wretched doings! How dare any Man preach such a Sermon as this? — No wonder he was condemned by the Synod

A

SERMON

ON

REGENERATION,

WITH AN

APOLOGY

AND AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

SYNOD OF KENTUCKY:

TOGETHER WITH

AN APPENDIX.

BY T. B. CRAIGHEAD, A. B. V. D. M.

LEXINGTON, Ky.

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FOR THE AUTHOR.

1809.

TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

LEXINGTON, Ky.

TO WHOM IT WAS ORIGINALLY DELIVERED,

AND

AT WHOSE REQUEST IT IS NOW PUBLISHED,

THIS DISCOURSE

IS RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

A

SERMON

ON

REGENERATION.

John 3. 3. *Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

HOW awful is this place, said Jacob, when he arose from the earth in the wilderness, where he had seen a ladder reaching up to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. I trust our hearts are affected with similar impressions on our entering into the house of God on this morning of a communion Sabbath. God himself is here, according to his promise. He comes to his temple to exhibit himself to the view of our faith in his moral perfections, as they appear in the works of redemption.

I design to discourse to you from the passage which I have read, because it leads me to a direct investigation of the nature and principles of regeneration, or the new birth. This is peculiarly necessary on this great occasion, that we may examine ourselves with precision, lest when the King comes in to see his guests any of us should be found not having a wedding garment.

You are not ignorant, I trust, that the new birth required is an intellectual and moral birth. It is neither physical nor carnal. It consists neither in the creation nor infusion of new faculties, new senses, perception, taste, disposition or subjective light, neither does it discover itself by feelings or emotions of imagination, or passion, or by bodily agitation. It is a strong and lasting impression made upon our rational faculties by the almighty force of

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divine faithfulness and truth. It is an unshaken purpose and pursuit formed in the mind by a full view of the government of God, as it is administered and explained by Jesus Christ. It is supported by an abiding conviction that under his wise and good administration it shall go well with the righteous and ill with the wicked; that infinite evil may be escaped, and infinite good obtained, through conformity to the laws and spirit of the government. The belief of these fundamental gospel principles constitutes the principles of the new nature, and imposes upon the heart a necessary choice of the grace and salvation offered in the gospel, as the greatest good. This choice is the accession of the sinner to the covenant of grace, proposed by God himself, and accepted by the sinner on the terms prescribed. I propose, therefore, in conformity with the spirit of the text, to open a treaty of peace with you, in the name of God Almighty, to settle the preliminaries, state the terms, and canvas the objections and subterfuges by which many evade the reconciliation. Had I only to encounter the natural ignorance and enmity of the carnal mind, fomented by natural and adventitious appetites and passions, the prospect of success would be comparatively flattering. But when iniquity has enlisted the understanding under her banners, and fortified herself with opinions and systematic evasions, the door of access is shut, so that hearing, men do not understand, and seeing, they do not perceive.

My very office and standing among you is mistaken by many. I am not, my brethren, an ambassador sent from a distant court to transact this business with you in behalf of my absent sovereign, or by the force of my persuasion to reconcile you to God. I pretend to no inspiration, impression or motion of the spirit, but what I receive in common with other christians from his word, which is equally open to the investigation of all. I have no standard experience of grace, feeling, taste, perception, disposition,

or internal light, which I dare to propose as an infallible criterion by which you may try and judge yourselves: Nor am I sent to pick up a few flattering words, in the form of invitations, promises, laws and sanctions, which you can neither understand nor believe, from the obsolete will, or dead letter, or musty records of a dead man, or a dead God, dead a thousand years ago, to beguile the irksome hours of a Sabbath, till we see whether Christ, moved by causes no way related to us or our exercises, will descend from heaven or ascend from the deep to reconcile us to God. No, my brethren! God is as really here as he is in heaven. He explains the whole counsel of his will to us so far as it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, or for instruction in righteousness, as faithfully and fully as he does to Gabriel in glory. So far as my words are in substance the word of God, so far they are cloathed with his authority and established as the orders of his throne. Merciful God! what am I, or what is Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, but mere ministers with like passions with other men. What are we but strangers and pilgrims pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though we had already attained, either were already perfect. Our office is only to state and explain to you, from his word, what he has written for your learning.

The prophets and apostles and the apostolic churches, were in a very different situation from us. They had immediate communication with heaven. The canon of scripture was not yet finished. The will of God was only in part revealed to man. So far as the scriptures were written, the apostles derived their knowledge of God and of his will from them. From them they reasoned, and to them they referred. Even when they were under the immediate inspiration of the spirit of God, they not only rested on the authority of the sacred records, but explained them by com-

paring one part with another, as in Peter's sermon on the memorable day of Pentecost. What was not yet recorded was revealed to them immediately by the spirit of God They delivered the revelation to their hearers as it was in truth not the word of man but of God. They received it in the same manner, and it wrought effectually in them that believed. What they spake from immediate revelation we speak from the records. It was then, and is now, a fair and just expression of the mind and will of God. His counsel shall stand unchanged forever.

The word of God, given by the immediate inspiration of God through the apostles, was the cause and foundation of the faith of the church then; and the same word now recorded, is the cause and foundation of the faith of christians at the present day. It was recorded for this express purpose "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name"

To the converts of the infant church the same spirit was given to supply the want of written revelation. It is not yet precisely ascertained at what period the sacred books were first collected into one volume, and separated from the spurious productions of that day; neither is it precisely known at what time the miraculous in-dwelling of the spirit ceased in the churches. It is probable it ceased when the necessity of that in-dwelling was superseded by a fair and undisputed record exhibited to the world.

While this spirit dwelt in the hearts of his people, it seems to have been his whole office to supply the want of records. He never infringed the liberty of the human will. He never infused such dispositions, made such impressions, shed such light on the mind, or otherwise laid such constraints or restraints on their natures as to render their actions necessary, or to force them to keep God' law. The church of Corinth was furnished with a rich variety of spiritual

gifts, at the very time they fell into such gross disorders in the use of them. And it was not because the spirit had withdrawn: for the Apostle tells them, the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. No doubt he meant the attentive and obedient, as a willing and unerring guide to direct their lives, but to the negligent, opiniative and obstinate, his instructions were as uninfluential as his written records now are. When this spirit was given, he attested his divinity, as our Lord had done before him, by his miracles. He never claimed the least respect to his authority, only as he proved his mission by his works. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they would not have had sin." The spirit proceeding from the father, and the son attested his mission in the same manner by the gift of tongues, discernment of spirits, prophecy, healing diseases and raising the dead. Even these evidences were not sufficient to secure the unwary from imposition. They were therefore commanded to try the spirits by the law and the testimony. The sacred records are of higher authority than any other revelation that ever was given to man. Our Lord acknowledges it. "But if ye believe not his (Moses) writings, how shall ye believe my words?" Moses' writings were not more credible than our Lord's words in any respect, but that they were written and connected with the general record of God which was published at that time. The reason is plain. Every part is supported by every miracle and every prophecy, together with every other correspondent doctrine contained in the whole. Every revelation to any individual was at the first partial, and not yet tried by or connected with the whole. Therefore it was proper to try the spirits by the written word. It would have been absurd to try them by a test less or even equally credible and intelligible.

This gift of the spirit was itself a proof of a real conversion from sin to God; therefore we read of the

sealing of the spirit, the earnest of the spirit, the first fruits of the spirit. And this spirit gave direct testimony. 'The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.' Indeed the in-dwelling of this spirit seems to have been a decisive proof of conversion, and the want of it of a state of nature. 'If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' He that believeth hath the witness in himself. And when Peter reported to the elders and brethren, that the spirit had been given to the Gentile converts as well as to the Jews, they admitted it as incontestible evidence that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

But this spirit never was given in any immediate agency to any man till after he had believed, and his faith never was ascribed to any immediate agency antecedent to conversion. 'After that ye believed ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise.' When our Lord promises to send the comforter in these immediate operations, he not only does not promise him to the world, but expressly says that the world cannot receive him; and when he describes the operations he shall perform on the world, they are mediate, and the means by which he shall work are precisely described. On the apostles and other believers (I suppose) he shall work immediately; 'he shall teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them;' and elsewhere tells them 'he will lead them into all the truth.' And in our Lord's mediatorial prayer, in the 17th chapter, we are taught at large the use of that truth with regard to themselves. 'Sanctify them thro' thy truth—thy word is truth.' Most of the chapter is an illustration of the moral or spiritual effect of the truth. And with regard to the world the spirit is to convince them of sin, &c. by no immediate agency, but by evidence addressed to their understandings. Because they believe not on me. And on the memorable day of Pentecost, on which he be-

gan to execute his pecular office, he executed it exactly according to the promise. He proved to the multitude that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this they were pricked in the heart. Their conviction of sin is nothing less than the work of the spirit, though he employed Peter to speak what he directed. But this is not all. Peter expressly promises the gift of the holy ghost, provided they repent and be baptised —'for the promise is to them and to their children,' &c. which clearly implies that they will be the subjects of no immediate agency unless they previously repent and believe. And though this gift of the spirit in his immediate agency was general in the infant church, it never appears to have been conferred on any individual before conversion—never appears to have wrought upon them any othey way but by representing the truth to them in words by the mouths of the apostles; and then conversion or sanctification never was ascribed to any other cause or agency but to the spirit by the word, or, what is the same thing, to faith in the word of the spirit, or to the spirit, and it was the effect of faith in his word. The conversion of the apostle Paul, the jailor, the twelve who had not so much as heard that there was a holy ghost—the three thousand, and the five thousand, are all examples of this. They all believed on the word spoken to them by the apostles, or by written or traditional revelation. And indeed the sacred scriptures were written for this express purpose. "But when the comforter is come, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."—"That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God. and that believing ye might have life through his name." And this very gospel 'is the wisdom of God and the power of God to those who are saved.'

I know the phrase "the word of God," is used in a figurative sense in the scriptures. 'By faith we know

that the worlds were framed by the word of God:* And in this figurative sense it signifies the physical power of God. It is wholly distinct from the gospel. No articulate sounds, no words, no letters, written in a book were designed to communicate to *nothing* from which creation arose any ideas which dwelt in the divine mind—no explication of his purpose to the unformed chaos. But in the simple sense in which the phrase is here used, it signifies only the means of communicating the thoughts and purposes of his divine mind to intelligent creatures. It has as little effect upon a stock or a stone as the word of his power would have on the intellectual and moral operations of our natures. The application of either to its improper object, would be as absurdly applied in the creator as in a creature. It is, therefore, the word of God in its simple sense which he has uniformly used before and after the fall, to carry on his moral administrations; and if his thoughts and counsels were communicated, it has ever been by some intelligible sign, and if not otherwise intelligible, it has been explained in words. Words, I suppose, of all other means of conveying knowledge to us through our faculties is the most precise; and I am confirmed in this belief because God has made use of them as the established channels of his intellectual communications from himself. The application of physical force to our intellectual natures, to produce a moral effect, would be just as wise as to apply reasoning and persuasion to a stone. To know God and his will, was the perfection of holiness in innocence; and to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent into the world, is eternal life since the fall. As the knowledge of God, before and after the fall, is the cause of all religious obedience, as well as love—so the spirit reveals that knowledge by his records. Those records are the expression of the thoughts and purposes of his heart.—By faith they are received as a just expression of his will.

The examples of Cornelius and Lydia are no exceptions to these general observations. The spirit indeed fell upon Cornelius while the apostle Peter was preaching; but he had been converted from sin to God by the Jewish scriptures. The angel testified, saying, Cornelius thy prayers and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God. And of Lydia, it is recorded that she worshipped God. Both were believers before they heard the preaching of Peter and Paul, but had not been credibly informed of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ, and of the new and spiritual worship he was establishing.

These immediate gifts of the spirit are withdrawn from the churches, but he abideth forever according to his promise, speaking the same things to us by record which he spake to them by inspiration. And his record is not less intelligible, less credible, or less profitable for doctrine reproof or correction, or less fit to make the man of God perfect. I therefore preach the gospel with boldness to you. I claim---I demand your reverence ;---not to me, not to a worm of the dust, not to my wisdom or opinions, or experiences, but to the majesty of God, in whose awful name I addresss you. So far as I speak in substance the truth contained in his word, so far only have I the least pretension of claim to your belief or regard. But I will insist upon it as a preliminary to all treaty, that you receive the proposals I am about to make from his word, as his own act and deed, and the negociation as begun and carried on by himself. I have no agency but to bring his voice to your ears, and humbly attempt to interpret his words. I have no gospel to preach, no terms to state but those he has already proposed, and if you cannot believe his word I have no means of confirming it. 'He is not a man, that he should lie, or one of the children of men, that he should repent.' 'Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is God that giveth the increase.' The word of his grace, or revelation of his will, received

into the heart, is as fruitful of moral and spiritual vegetations as the w·rd of his power on the seed sown in the field of nature. 'It is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' The gospel is the seed of heaven. Our Saviour exhibits the preaching of the gospel successfully and unsuccessfully under thi· figure in the parable of a sower. 'A sower went out to sow. Some of the seed fell by the way side, some on stony ground, some among thorns, and some on good ground. Our Lord explains the parable: The gospel was preached to men of different descriptions, and with different success. Some neglected it—some received it partially, superficially, and inconsiderately—some in a hurry of thought in the ardor of their pursuits, and in the eagerness of passion, and it was unfruitful—others received it in a good and understanding heart, and it brought forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. The gospel, therefore, is the seed of which the apostle John tells us 'it abideth forever'—it abideth in those that are born of God. This is the seed of the new and spiritual birth. 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.' And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you: 'For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.' 'God hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' These are precise explanations given us to-day by the spirit of God of the figure used in the text. We are born of the spirit, but we are born of him by his word, and by his word believed. And it appears that this very faith of his word is what renders us capable of pleasing God. Enoch, before he was translated, had this testimony, that he pleased God; "but without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Here the aposle proves that he had faith, because it was impossi-

ble to come to God, and especially to please him, without faith; but faith changes all the heart. It works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. It is by the knowledge of God and his will, acquired by his word from the spirit who 'leads us into all the truth,' that we are enabled to 'lay aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets us, and run with patience the race that is set before us.' It is by the precious promises in the gospel we become partakers of the divine nature. It is by the truth revealed by the spirit, and received by faith, that we are sanctified. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

I know it is contended by many that it is the immediate power of the spirit that renders the word effectual to produce either faith or holiness. And indeed it is true the spirit must be present to the thoughts of the heart when we believe; but in what other sense can he be present to an intelligent creature to produce intellectual effects? Can any thing dwell in our mind but thoughts or ideas? When we perceive, reason, judge, or chuse, is any thing present to our minds but thoughts or ideas? Is it not by them we begin, carry on, and conclude every mental or intellectual operation? And can a man believe in the word and not in the spirit? Is it a separate and distinct act of the mind to believe in the word and its author? Words are stipulated signs of ideas. Of what is the word of God a stipulated sign, if it be not of his will? If you leave out the idea of his will, of which his words are stipulated signs, what have you left? Not what infidels will acknowledge it to be, a system of excellent morals, but a mere blank, a perfect nullity. You believe by the immediate operation of the spirit! What do you ~~believe~~ receive by the immediate operation? Do you ~~believe~~ receive any thing not taught in the word? Shew me your credentials, or I will not believe you. Our Lord required no credit, only as he established it by his works. "If I had not done

among them the works which none other man did, they would not have had sin." Unless you produce similar credentials, I am justified by our Lord in declaring you an enthusiast. Your pretensions to immediate agency are inadmissible on gospel principles. Do you believe only what is contained in the word? Then you believe by the word as the means by which you are taught of the spirit, and you have no immediate knowledge. Do you pretend that you are enlightened to understand the scriptures by the spirit? How comes it then that good men differ in their interpretation of the same passage? Does the spirit say one thing to one christian, and unsay it to another? If you are enlightened in the word by the spirit, how dare you dispute with any man about the meaning? What! will you reason about the truth or propriety of what God has said? Will you blasphemously contend against the light of the spirit bestowed upon another, or will you presumptiously relinquish the light you have yourself received from him. This is one of the many cases in which the common sense of all christians directs their lives into a continual train of opposition to their absurd theories. It is true the spirit must be present to the thoughts of the heart, as a God of eternal truth and faithfulness, when we believe; and his word must be received as an unequivocal expression of the thoughts of his heart and purposes of his will, whenever we do believe; and this is a species of power which can operate on no other objects but intellectual creatures, but works as effectually on them throughout all nature to produce its proper effects, that is that state of mind we call believing, as the physical power of God does to produce a man or a mountain. This is the very power that creates the belief in the pure minds of the inhabitants of heaven that they shall be eternally safe and happy under the government of God. This is the very power that breaks through all the dispositions, passions and desires of all the hosts of hell, and inflicts

the dreadful belief that they shall perish forever.—This is the very power that begets all the faith in good and in bad men in the world. Even infidels, if they believe any thing relating to his moral government, it is because they fancy they have had some hints of it in the book of nature. I therefore, in the name of God Almighty, offer to your faith and acceptance the gospel of Jesus Christ. And you need not fear falling into the Armenian here-y of free will and sufficient grace. Armenian is often a term of reproach, used to cover gross ignorance and absurdity, or to supply the want of argument. The confession of faith is as Calvanistic as we are concerned to be, and the freedom of the will is one of the most fundamental principles in that book. And though we are not free to do good in our fallen state, because we are destitute of adequate motives to rescue us from the government of passions and appetites, yet we are under no necessity of nature to sin. God is this day in this place waiting to be gracious, his spirit striving and declaring he delights not in the death of a sinner, but that all should turn to him and live; and demanding, 'what could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done?' What hinders his entrance into your hearts? Is the choice of your hearts under the controul of Almighty causes, originating in his divine will, which binds you as a slave to the galley, and yet does he insult your wretchedness by renewed offers of grace, which he will not suffer you to accept, and damn you with peculiar and gospel condemnation, because you will not accept? Or does he, finding you dead in trespasses and sins, do every thing but quicken you or make you alive, which he will not do; and then condemn you to hell because you have not performed the duties of active life, and then demand, 'what could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done?' God and you have met together in this place to-day; are you going away empty, because the spirit did not, or because he would

not release you from the yoke of sin, nor create you anew in Chirst Jesus? And then will he condemn you for not being alive and living to him? No! my brethren, you have power in the exercise of the freedom of your will, to stop your ears and shut your eyes, so that hearing you may not hear, or seeing you may not perceive; and of course you have power to reject the counsel of God against your own souls, to your condemnation; but you are impelled by no necessity of nature to that criminal and dangerous opposition. If you desist from it, you will hear the voice of God in his written word, and it will not return to him void. Receive it as it is in truth the word of God, and it will work in you with everlasting and Almighty energy. It is the power of God to those that believe. Desist from your obstinate and persevering resistance, and yield your attention and serious consideration to the repeated impressions from the word, the ordinances, calls and promises of God, and he will by them work faith in you, and thereby unite you to Christ in your effectual calling.

But it will be asserted, after all, that the honest and good heart in the parable, is a regenerated heart. What, is the heart regenerated before the seed is sown, though God himself ascribes the regeneration to the seed after it is sown in the heart, and sanctification to the word believed? The heart then is reconciled to God, without the faith of the promise, or the hope of forgiveness—loves God without knowing him, or believing the report of the gospel concerning him—made partaker of the richest benefits of redemption while he is yet under the wrath and curse of God, for out of Jesus Christ he is a consuming fire 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' No! The good and understanding heart in the parable, is a reflecting, enquiring, examining heart. When a great multitude followed our Lord he inculcated this doctrine in two parables: 'For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down

first and counteth whether he have sufficient to finish it. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh with twenty thousand.' To the same purpose also is the parable of the house which was built upon the sand and the house which was built upon a rock; the builder having dug deep, (intellectual and spiritual digging and calculation consists in reflection, diligent inquiry and consideration.) There is not a hint here that there is danger that the spirit will not come, or that they cannot believe. But Christ's manner of preaching is out of fashion at the present day. You hear nothing from him of the current cant. Pray to God to give you faith to believe. Pray, pray, strive, agonize, wait on till Christ comes and delivers you. Without hesitation or delay, and without expecting or requiring any antecedent preparation or qualification, but guilt, enmity and opposition against God, I preach the gospel of Christ to you. 'He did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.' He neither expected to find faith nor regeneration on earth. He came to confer both by his word. The spirit proceeded from the father and the son to reveal and record that word, and to abide forever, teaching and inculcating the same thing. And he declares his word is sharp and powerful as any two edged sword. 'He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' He neither expects nor requires any moral or religious qualification but what he works by his word; and he never places religion in any new sense, perception, taste or disposition, which arises from lust or passion. No being, created or uncreated, in heaven or on earth, ever had such a disposition adequate to the direction of a holy life.—The angels had not in glory or they never could have fallen. Adam had not in innocence, or he never would have lusted for the forbidden fruit. The man Christ Jesus had not, or he never would have prayed in an

agony 'If it be possible let this cup pass.' The holiness of God Almighty does not consist in disposition. 'As I live saith the Lord I delight not in the death of a sinner. but that all should turn to me and live.' 'He wills not the condemnation of any man, but that all should come to repentance.' I will allow that these passages are figurative, and spoken after the manner of men; but they must have some meaning, and that cannot be less than that the execution of justice and judgment is his strange act. His infinitely benevolent mind is reconciled to the punishment of sin, not because he delights in it, as he does in the happiness of his creatures, but because punishment is necessary to promote the designs of his goodness in the order, happiness and perfection of his government. His style and expression clearly prove this. 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?' Indeed the disposition contended for would be a defective trait in the character of Deity. Had he equal gratification in bestowing happiness in heaven and in inflicting punishment in hell, it would be inconsistent with all ideas of goodness. A christian who had a disposition to punish an offender and could enjoy the punishment as Nero did the burning of the city of Rome, would be as unlike a christian as Nero. To have bowels of compassion is the natural state of innocent man, and it is never obliterated but by guilt and crimes.

If sense, perception or disposition, were the root of holiness, or adequate to the government of God, it would supersede the necessity of wisdom or goodness in God, and the necessity of his government of his creatures. Laws would be as impertinent to the direction of the life, as laws requiring us to taste sweetness in honey, bitterness in gall, and sourness in vinegar—as idle as laws requiring us to eat when we were hungry, drink when we were thirsty, or rest when we were weary. The use of every conceivable government among intelligent creatures is to

prescribe laws for our conduct not prescribed by disposition, and in most instances directly contrary to the disposition. The use and design of power and authority is to make it the interest of the subjects of the government to obey the laws as they prescribe duties in direct opposition to the disposition. And the only use of publishing the laws with their sanctions, as in the government of God, which both bestows rewards and inflicts punishment, is to convince the subjects that God will make it their greatest good or highest interest to obey, as he will rescue them from infinite evil and bestow upon them infinite good. For this reason the christian life is a life of self-denial and mortification, of running, wrestling, striving and fighting the good fight of faith; and it is the knowledge of this law with its rewards and penalties, that reconciles and enables the christian to endure the trials, persecutions and afflictions of the spiritual warfare. Abraham, the father of the faithful, looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Moses reconciled himself to his duty by having respect to the recompence of reward. The apostle Paul, lest he should become a cast-away, and if by any means he might attain to the resurrection of the dead. Our Lord for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame. Therefore our Lord with infinite propriety said, 'this is eternal life to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent into the world.' 'If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.'

I calculate, therefore, on no favourable disposition which can be of any consequence in the transactions of this awful day. I will not despair of success if you will only receive the word of God, not according to the fashion of the world as a dead letter that killeth, or as a tale that has been told, but as the word of the living and present God. Even suppose you

should add to your guilt and enmity against God such arrogance as to boast that you are rich and increased in spiritual goods, and stand in need of nothing—not knowing that you are 'poor and miserable, and blind and naked.' This word is an adequate cure of even this malignant and stubborn disease of the soul. For that purpose I have it in express charge from the sovereign to declare to you in his name and by his own words, that 'while you live in sin and unbelief you are under the wrath and curse of God, bound over to destruction by the law which you and your fathers have broken and by the gospel, to infinitely heavier vengeance, because you have not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God. And I have further to declare that you are enemies to God in your minds by wicked works, prone to iniquity as the sparks to fly upwards; all the imaginations of the thoughts of your hearts only evil, and that continually; that you are utterly unable to save or deliver yourself either from the curse or the yoke of iniquity; and for this reason Christ is come in the flesh, has published peace and proclaimed salvation. And to-day he offers you pardon, reconciliation and eternal life through his blood; and if you will only confide in him so as to commit your soul to him, he will keep what you commit to him to the great day. And that you may not trifle with the proposal, I am required to tell you from God's word, that this is the accepted time, the merciful season of your visitation. That all things are ready in Christ Jesus.—That God is waiting to be gracious, and his spirit striving to reclaim you by ordinances, providences, invitations, promises and threatenings, and compassionately lamenting your folly. 'How often would I have gathered you.' I am bound further to remind you that you are every moment in danger of hell fire, 'where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.'—The business requires dispatch. The long-suffering and patience of God, abused and perverted, will not

always last. He will ere long lay hold on vengeance. Now if you will receive this as truth, resting on the authority of God himself, who cannot lie, it becomes one of the principles of the new nature, one of the members of the new creature. The seed already begins to shoot its roots, and draw water from the wells of salvation. It will change its shape and assume an appearance somewhat different when combined with the other members, but its general nature and operations will continue the same through every stage of your christian life. It will constrain you to fly from wrath to grace, from guilt to pardon, from enmity to peace.'

I am aware that a common case of conscience will bewilder you here. You will complain you cannot believe nor feel the love of God in your heart. These and similar cases of conscience are altogether of modern fabrication. They grow out of our fanciful opinions and homespun mysteries. No such case ever occurred under the preaching either of our Lord or his apostles. In all their preaching, and in all the conversions of which we read, we never read of a complaint they cannot believe, of a direction but to believe, of a mean or cause of believing, but the promises of God; of a story of conversion or experience of grace, but a mere profession of their faith in Christ, and in what he said; or of a fruit required but holiness. The apostles indeed prayed our Lord to encrease their faith; but it appears by his answer to have been the faith of miracles; and one who had but little acquaintance with him or his doctrines, said, 'Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief; but he appears to have treated both the addresses pretty much as he did Peter when he proposed making three tabernacles, one for our Lord, one for Moses, and one for Elias, as words without meaning. But in both cases the faith of miracles appears to be the object of the prayers, a species of faith very different from the faith of the christian. Never did he promise the spirit

to do any thing but lead them into, and sanctify them by the truth; and in both cases the effect was produced by revealing it, and not by revealing what Christ had said to his disciples, except bringing to their remembrance what they had forgotten, and revealing what our Lord did not think fit to reveal in person.

Another prevailing opinion, near akin to this, is, like it, a very great obstruction to the faith of the gospel; I mean that the knowledge of God derived from his word, is very different from the knowledge acquired by the spirit. And the passage on which it is pretended to be supported is grossly perverted. 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' A mere compliance with the external ordinances, without knowing or understanding the spirit or the meaning of the revelation, never was of any value under the old testament or the new. The formal, unmeaning, unbelieving use of the means of grace, so often prescribed at this day to sinners, while they wait till the spirit comes to sanctify them, never was prescribed in the Jewish or christian church. To consider, reflect, calculate, in short to dig deep till they settled their faith and hope on Jesus Christ himself, was the uniform spirit of the gospel under both dispensations. But if we pretend that the spiritual meaning is something very different from the plain meaning of the word, we make void the word of God by our vain tradition. How, in that case, could I believe this promise, 'I will forgive your iniquities.' The meaning is obvious and plain, and if conscious of sin, I have a right to believe it as the promise of God to me, as our Lord and his apostles always declared it to be in such cases; then my faith, it is plain, will give ease to my conscience, and one of the principles of the enmity of the carnal mind against God, is removed. I say removed, because I never can be reconciled to a government until I have some security that it will not destroy me. But if I believe this promise is a dead letter, that the belief of it is the belief of a lie,

and that God does not speak peace to me in that promise, it is impossible for me to believe it. To believe it would be knowingly to believe a lie. Therefore the enmity of the human heart, so far as it consists in the consciousness of sin, is defended from the weapons of the gospel; and the man is encouraged in unbelief, because you tell him his faith would be unbelief. And as the secret is not yet communicated to him, his conscience will surely acquit him for not believing he knows not what.

If these antecedent acquirements are necessary to saving faith, it must have been very unfaithful and unskilful preaching in our Lord and his apostles, to never notice it on those very occasions where, of all others, they are most necessary—very unfair to charge their hearers to believe the promise, for it was to them and to their children, to them that are afar off and near at hand; for it was no promise to them unless they had acquired these previous qualifications. Belief and unbelief were indifferent. Their right to the promise depended on these previous qualifications.

Pardon me, brethren. Without deference to man, or to the opinions of man, I declare to you that the truths I am inculcating on you from the word of God, are the very thoughts and purposes of his heart without reserve or equivocation. You are absolutely under wrath and in sin. If you receive it as it is in truth the word of God, you will believe with as little doubt as you have of your existence, and it will certainly divorce your hearts from sin. And as a divine faith is believing on the testimony of God, it will be a divine faith, and it will work in you with divine energy. I know it is said this is denying that faith is the gift of God. What, is faith not the gift of God when it is the effect of his word? Can you conceive of faith otherwise than that state of mind in which we rely on the testimony of another for the truth of what we do not know to be true on any other ground? Is

not this the very faith Christ requires? 'To believe in him.' 'To believe his words.' 'The disciples are to testify, and the spirit to reveal the truth, that ye might believe.' 'Believe me for the work's sake.' 'If I had not come and spoken unto them they would not have had sin.' 'If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, ye would not have had sin.' Admitting any operation you please, it must rest upon the testimony of God some way or other, and that testimony is the cause of it. What other testimony, sign, token, feeling, or what you will, is more incontestible than his records, more legible, more secure from misconstruction. And is it not the gift of God because it is given by his word? Is not his word the proper mean? Do you know of any other way by which it can be produced? Is it not belief of the promise that gives place to vision when we enter into the kingdom of heaven? But this is not all, faith is necessarily a mediate gift. The word is itself expressive of the means of the knowldge acquired by it. It is as distinct an idea from every other channel through which knowledge is communicated to the mind, as intuition or sensation. You might as well talk of a man seeing without eyes, hearing without ears, as believing without testimony. And he can no more resist the force of the divine truth of God, if he suffers it to enter his intellectual eye, than he can prevent his natural eye from seeing when natural light enters into it. Receive it therefore, I pray you, as a mortifying and painful, but salutary truth, that you are in sin, and you begin to lay up the good seed in your hearts. Your creation anew in Christ Jesus is commenced

The doctrine of the new birth consisting in a change of disposition in consequence of a new sense, perception or taste, is as false philosophy as it is divinity. Sense, perception and taste represent objects to the understanding as agreeable or disagreeable, but here their office is at an end. They can never decide

whether they are eligible or ineligible, every circumstance considered. They calculate no consequences, are affected by no relations, act independently of moral right or wrong. Sweetness will always excite a disposition to taste it, beauty to gaze at, greatness to admire it, but it belongs to reason and reflection to judge of the expediency of indulging or denying it. It belongs only to devils and damned ghosts to be under the necessary government of their dispositions. They have nothing on which they can calculate but everlasting pain and disappointment. They have neither pleasure nor emolument to expect greater than present gratification, if any thing can gratify in that dreadful abode. Man is in a different situation. He is never necessarily governed by his disposition or inclination only when there is no object productive of greater good within the reach of his faculties; that is when no other and greater good can be discovered by the exertion of his intellectual faculties. Moral agents under the government of God, and informed of his law and sanctions, are never necessarily governed by their dispositions We judge of expediency or eligibility by the law, and the authority of the law rescues us from the necessary government of our dispositions. It leads us to infinitely higher objects of desire than those of disposition. Our attachment to the law is not the effect of disposition, nor is it judged by the agreeableness or disagreeableness of its prescriptions to our taste or disposition, but by its tendency to individual and general safety and happiness. It is an infinitely good and perfect law if it leads to infinite happiness and perfection, and guards against violations with infinite sanctions. We delight in the law of God, though its requisitions are not joyous but grievous, when 'it works out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' These are the objects that command the will and affect the heart. We chuse perseveringly and pursue without fluctuation what we perceive to be infinitely best for us.

There is one other refuge to which I fear your thoughts will fly to evade the negotiation. A refuge to which you are solicited by the prevailing opinions of the times. I mean to pray, strive, agonize, and wait in the use of means, till the spirit in his good time makes them effectual. But this, my brethren, is mere evasion. How will you pray, or read, or hear, acceptably to God, or profitably to your own souls, while you live in unbelief? Will it profit you to read the word of God, and not believe it? to be a hearer and not a doer of the word? 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son.' How would you pray in unbelief? Could you confess your sins any other way but with lying lips? Could you ask forgiveness through Jesus Christ, in whom you do not believe? Could you devote yourself to God by solemn vows and engagements, while you are enemies to him in your minds by wicked works? Dare you approach him as an absolute God, who declares that out of Jesus Christ he is a consuming fire. 'He that turneth away his ear from the law his prayer shall be an abomination.' Would you strive against sin? You will certainly beat the air. You have no power of resisting sin. In Christ only and by the faith of the truth which he has taught do you acquire any more moral power than a heathen, perhaps than a devil. To wait for the time prescribed by the spirit, is at once to reject the truth of his record, and to roll over the blame of your unbelief on him. Has he not said and recorded it, 'This is the accepted time,' that he is waiting to be gracious, that all things are ready, nay, that he is striving with you by his word, his ordinances and his promises; and does he not charge you not to quench his spirit, for he is knocking at the door of your hearts for admission. Dare you charge him with delinquency or delay? Dare you pretend that you are waiting for him? That your ways are equal and his unequal? Should this negociation fail

of success to-day, will you dare to say it was because the spirit did not come to give you the necessary preparation to enter into a covenant? Because he would not give you faith, without which the treaty is impossible. And if this gospel prove a savour of death unto death to your souls to-day, will he condemn your soul to hell because you have not that gift which he alone can give, for which you are waiting according to his direction I do not understand only that if this treaty is unsuccessful he will leave you on the same ground you were before it commenced.—No. He will condemn you for unbelief. Because you have not and cannot obtain from him who alone can work it in you that faith without which it is impossible to please him. If the system you espouse be true it is a false and unfair representation of his conduct to say he passes you by and leaves you in your sin. 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only begotten son of God,' and 'This is the condemnation that light is come into the world.' The heaviest vengeance in hell is because you have not that gift which he alone can give, or, what is the same thing, the necessary preparatives to enable you to believe. And thus, after all his invitations, promises, oaths that he delights not in the death of a sinner, entreaties and expostulations, waiting, striving, knocking, warning and reproving, the secret appears at last to be that he had no design of mercy or salvation for you. He was not willing you should believe, or he would have given you faith. The whole parade was a piece of mere chicanery—a mere imposition on your credulity—a mere snare, to entrap you that you might be a more wretched and more pitiable victim in hell.

Forbear, my brethren, to trifle with God. Your waiting on the spirit is a mere system of evasion, of exculpation and accusation. You justify yourself while you charge God foolishly. You have Moses and the prophets. You have Christ and his apostles.

You have the promised Comforter proceeding from the father and the son, testifying to you to-day by his records all the promises of grace written in his book. Heaven has no higher or more credible testimony to give. The power of believing in every intelligent creature consists in the strength of the testimony. Believing is never either an independent or voluntary act. No man can believe without testimony. No man can resist the force of credible testimony if he suffers it to enter into the view of his understanding. Neither disposition, nor will, nor motives, have the least effect. Believing is an intellectual, not a moral act Dispositions or moral principles may affect, suffering the testimony to enter into the view of the understanding; but when it enters, the desire of life, temporal or eternal, nor the fear of death can affect it. In the licentiousness of your freedom you may refuse to hear or obey God, and destroy your own soul; but if you admit his word to enter into the view of your understanding as his word, it is the highest, most coercive and irresistible cause of believing in the universe. If you cannot believe God's word, you can believe nothing. It is equally forcible on the minds of angels and devils Faith is therefore the radical grace. It pre-supposes no antecedent moral qualifications. The full article of the faith of every christian is that 'in me there dwelleth no good thing.' 'That I am dead in trespasses and in sins.' This is the very reason of his applying to Christ for life. 'The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God.' Can he derive life from Christ by faith and not antecedently and indeed ever afterwards believe that he was dead in trespasses and sins till he acquired that gift by faith? Indeed it is impossible to rely on Christ for one gift of his grace until we are convinced of the opposite want by the faith of the same great creator. 'No man can come unto the son unless the father draw him.' It is an abiding conviction of sin, accompanied with

apprehensions of the displeasure and hope of the favor of God, that first reconciles it to the heart to employ Christ in his offices, or enables us to offer up a prayer or any other species of respectful expression to God through him with unfeigned lips. All moral attraction consists in motives. And I if I be lifted up from the earth, said our Lord, will draw all men unto me. He had no attractives on the cross but what appeared by the truths he illustrated and confirmed, the justice, the mercy and the faithfulness of God. So the apostle Paul reasoned, as before observed. By faith Enoch was translated—for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Without faith it is impossible to come to God or to please him. Faith acquaints us with the divine attractives without which we cannot come to him. But when we are acquainted with these we can never rest without devoting ourselves to him and his service.

Having settled the preliminaries and obviated some of the evasions to which men are prone to resort, I proceed to state the general articles of the covenant of grace between God and your souls.

The first article of the covenant declared by God Almighty, and to be admitted by you, is that you are in sin and under the wrath and curse of God. But I am required to declare, at the same time, that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And I am authorised to say that the declaration is neither equivocal nor insidious. He does not mean by 'that any should perish but that all should come to repentance,' that one out of ten, or a hundred, or a thousand, or perhaps no one in this congregation, should come to repentance. He does not mean to make so equivocal and undefinable a declaration, that no one can apply it to himself, nor de-

rive any practical benefit from the belief of it. Neither did he design to allure you here with fair speeches that he might damn you with a vengeance for not believing a promise he never made to you, and for rejecting grace and salvation which he must have been either unwilling or unable to give you, if the matter rests merely and exclusively on the sovereignty of his will. No, my brethren, God will be true though every man should be a liar. Every invitation and every promise is yea and amen in Christ Jesus. He never was the author of sin by will or by connivance. He used every means consistent with the freedom of the human will and ~~his~~ *man's* moral agency to prevent the entrance of sin into the world. He never willed the destruction of any man only on the account of sin. He never rejects the sinner who does not reject the counsel of God against his own soul. And to that rejection we are neither compelled by any necessity of nature, by any dispensation of divine providence nor secret purpose of his heart.

Attend therefore for your souls sake to the further warning he gives you of your danger while you continue in unbelief. The consciousness of sin is the occasion of habitual application to God for forgiveness and acceptance in Jesus Christ in the whole course of the christian life. I will therefore exhibit the law to your view as a looking-glass, in which you may discover your own image and acquaint yourself with your standing as it appears to the final judge of all. The moral law requires you to love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself, under the awful penalty of death and hell. The gospel exposition of this love is very different from the fashionable feelings of the present time, which, like Jonah's gourd, rises in a night and perishes in a night. Very unlike the love which blazes like a torch and burns out its fuel, leaving nothing but cinder behind it. 'This is the love of God, that ye keep my commandments.' The best sign and the

best means of promoting the love of God in the heart is keeping the commandments. Wicked works is the root of the enmity of the carnal mind against God. Men are enemies to him in their minds by wicked works. We as rational creatures are not insensible of the value of an infinitely perfect government only as we have rendered ourselves obnoxious to that government by sin. Nothing, therefore, can tend more to ~~promote~~ remove the opposition of the heart and inspire the love of the government and governor than obedience to the laws. The proper sign of the love of God and the means of promoting it is to worship him in spirit and in truth. If you love God you will go to him day by day to form yourself on the laws and spirit of his government in your principles and practice. You will behold him present with you, and under a deep impression of his awful majesty you will religiously endeavour to improve and enlarge your knowledge of his nature and his will. You will correct your mistakes, confess and renounce your sins, and amend your ways and your doings. This will not be a duty imposed upon you by a sullen and tyrannical master, as mere matter of homage or useless parade, without any conceivable advantage to you or to him. But it will be imposed upon you by your own wants and the rich supply he has provided for you. By your moral weakness, by the emptiness, instability and vanity of all created enjoyments, and by the riches of his grace and the fullness of the provision made for you. The second table of the law is like the first. The performance of the duties required by the law is the best evidence of the love of others required by the law, and the best means of promoting it. We have in our natures fallen, as they are strong incentives to the love of each other. Not only our weakness and our wants require society, but most of our enjoyments are social. Even those that are sensual are heightened by society. Our food and drink are more savoury when we partake of them with a friend. All

the malignant passions in our natures are kindled by competitions, and oppositions of interest, and pursuit. When these passions are inflamed and suffered to exert themselves without moral or civil restraints, they issue in a continual round of reciprocal injuries and revenges. Were the passions of men laid generally under the restraints of the moral law there would be few competitions, little opposition of interest and pursuits; and were we as individuals not only to desist from all unfair and unreasonable expectations, doing good to all mankind as we have opportunity, healing their very vices and follies with gentleness and forbearance, compassionating their weakness and ministering to their wants, we would remove many of the causes which embitter society, and cultivate that benevolence and those social affections which the law requires; we would abstain from those wicked works which are the occasion of enmity to God and man. This is the law by which we are to be judged, and therefore by it we may form a correct estimate of our standing in the eye of the judge. But it is to be remembered 'that whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' Every precept or prohibition is necessary to the happiness and perfection of the race to which we belong, and therefore the firm and inflexible administration of the law with its sanctions is the safety of the government. By the law therefore is the knowledge of sin. The gospel is a new law adapted to the state of this fallen province of God's universal government, established with heavier penalties and better promises. The penalties of the law are not to be compared with the penalties of the gospel. 'This is the condemnation that light is come into the world.' The first and fundamental requisition of this law is faith—the faith of Christ as the great *day's man*, and the knowledge and belief of what he has taught. The object of the gospel is not different from the object of the moral law. Christ did not come to destroy it, but to fulfil, establish and

make it honourable. Not to release us from obedience to the moral law, but to render obedience practicable.—To rescue us from the curse and wrath of God, that we might serve him in newness of life. 'For there is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared.' Now the knowledge and faith of this truth is what constitutes the first member of the new nature, acquired by the new birth. This is what divorces the heart from sin. This embitters and poisons the cup of iniquity, not by destroying our appetites, passions or imaginations, or even our vicious dispositions acquired by habit. This would render the gifts of a good providence tasteless and destroy the original incentives to action in life. But we are divorced from iniquity as the drunkard is when the cup is poisoned, as Adam was from the garden of Eden when it was guarded by cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, as Joseph was when he said 'how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' as David was when he had resolved and said that he would keep God's law, as our Lord was when he said 'the cup which my father hath given me shall I not drink it?' though the anticipation threw him into an agony. Now the authority of the law rests entirely with God, and is supported only by his power. This law, by which the heart is divorced from sin, has no force on the conscience only as it is an established law in the government of God. The laws of every government are known only by the records. We have access to no records in this province of the divine dominion but his written word.—And we acquire the knowledge or faith of this law and government only by the credit we give to the record. Were the divine spirit to return and make a new revelation immediately, I suppose he would reveal it in words again. He has always resorted to words to solve every vision or impression he ever made upon the mind, and we are not sure he ever made a revelation exclusively otherwise. But words

or language was certainly the mode he has chosen to reveal the laws of his government to our minds, and it is not likely the plan adopted by infinite wisdom requires revision or amendment. Were he again to use an audible voice, he would probably use the same words which the holy ghost, infinitely wise, has already indicted. If he repeated only what he had before revealed, it would be either less intelligible or less credible than the records, for our Lord admits that his words are not as likely to be believed as the writings of Moses. If he revealed any thing new, and not contained in the scriptures, it would be enthusiasm to believe it unless he attested it by miracles and prophecies, as our Lord and he himself had always done, and it would be of very suspicious authority at last; for he has told us that he has declared the whole counsel of God, and he has assured us that no man may safely add to his word. If he gave us any new disposition, taste, perception, or any other power of acquiring original thoughts or ideas, it would be a concession on the part of the spirit that man had abused or perverted no power of which he was possessed, or buried no talent which had been given him, and therefore that his unbelief was blameless. And it would at the same times destroy the credit of the christian's faith. Does not every one know and acknowledge that in every species of judging, whether by sensation, reasoning or testimony, be the evidence by which you judge of the truth or falsehood of a proposition, so far as your judgment is influenced by taste, disposition or attachment, so far you are an unjust judge; so far as you are influenced by inclination or desire, so far your reasoning is inconclusive and your judgment confessedly false. Just as much, therefore, as christians attribute their faith or the faith of others to peculiar perception, taste or disposition, so much they detract from its credibility, and espouse the cause of infidelity. They persuade others to believe what they acknowledge they cannot be-

lieve in consistency with their faculties, and that they believe themselves without good reason because they desire to believe.

The faith of the gospel which I am endeavouring to inculcate as the foundation of this covenant to which you are solicited to accede, stands upon a very different ground. 'If I had not done among them the works which none other did they would not have had sin.' 'If I do not the works of my father, believe me not, but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.' And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe.' The faith of Christ, as inculcated by him, is built upon a foundation which he exhibits to the view of friends and enemies. He invites their investigation, and lays himself open to their criticism. He shelters neither himself nor his doctrine under any mystic evasions; and requires no confidence in any doctrines he teaches only as he satisfies the most rigid and unprejudiced scrutiny that he is the promised Messiah—a teacher sent from God. And it is on the same ground he invites you to believe today, and believing to come to him and enter into this covenant of life and salvation with him.

The second article of the treaty is offered to your faith on the supposition that the first article is admitted. 'He did not come to call the righteous to repentance;' and it is an inconsistency to apply to him as a mediator or a saviour if you are not conscious of sin and apprehensive of danger.

To every sinner under the belief and impression of the law and gospel, as we have seen them explained above, he comes near to-day to seek and to save him. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life.' And the promised spirit abides to this day, and is here assuring us that it is the good pleasure of the father and the very de-

sign of the son in coming into the world to redeem us from the curse of the law. Not by abolishing but by establishing it, and making it honourable. All nature was groaning under the curse by the imputation of Adam's transgression. All the pains and sorrows of every order of animated nature was a tribute to the honour and establishment of the law. The authority of the law was essential to the interest and happiness of the intellectual creation destined for glory and immortality; and the whole world, by an ordinance of heaven, attested its necessity by pains and death. Even this was not sufficient—the creator of all things; the only begotten of the father, to give the finishing stroke to the dreadful picture, himself was made under the law, subjected himself to the precept and the penalty. He knew the efficacy of his example upon every intelligent creature, and 'for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame.' By his life and his death he illustrated the justice and mercy of God, the two attributes of his nature which have the most direct and universal influence on the practice to silence all cavils, prevent all presumptuous hopes, he exhibited a God absolutely inexorable and irreconcilable to sin on any consideration whatsoever. He was his only beloved son. The father was well pleased with him for his righteousness sake. Christ was guilty only by imputation, that is, by consent and by covenant. He was in an agony; he sweat drops of blood; he rent the darkness of the night with his cries and his prayers. An angel was sent to strengthen and to comfort him: But he must drink the very dregs of the cup of wrath which was mingled for him according to the prescriptions of the law. Here forgiveness of sin is guarded against presumption by the cross of Christ, and against despair by that awful expression of the love of God. Faith draws her divine influence and consolations from heaven through the cross. The promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, but they are seal-

ed by his blood. He forgives sin, but forgives it only that he may be feared. He blots it out of the book of his remembrance, that the love and obedience of it may be broken. He rescues the sinner by his death, that he may serve him in newness of life. The very design of his sufferings was to guard us against sin, and to encourage our obedience. 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' And without a strong and abiding impression of the justice and mercy of God holiness is impossible. He offers therefore his promise of forgiveness through Jesus Christ to your faith as the second article of the covenant of grace: But he offers it to you as an article of the covenant only as you derive from its author by the faith of the promise, unfeigned repentance and an established purpose of new obedience. Now if you can believe in Christ Jesus so as to confide in him, commit your soul to him in well-doing, relying upon him for the accomplishment of the promise, and committing yourselves to the direction of his laws, the second article of the covenant is settled—another member of the new creature is formed, and you are [illegible] for the birth.

It is thought by many that this faith is impossible unless the spirit has let previous light into the mind to let the sinner see all the perfections of God harmonize in his salvation. Now I hold that the perfections of God do not harmonize in the salvation of a sinner before he believes, and if any such light is let into his mind it is a false light. 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed.' 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' 'He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those that diligently seek him.' 'No man can come unto the son except the father draw him.' The unbeliever in any essential article of the practical system of the gospel is destitute of the principles of the new nature, without which it is impossible to please God. The very use of faith is

to receive into the heart from the spirit through his written word the knowledge of the gospel system, which is itself the principles of that new nature on the principles of a holy life. To receive a creature to grace and favour without faith, would therefore break down the moral defence of the intelligent creation of God, which had been built up by all the pains and sorrows of earth and of hell, and had been crowned by the sufferings of our Lord, and had been cemented by his blood. It would disprove the first and most essential principle in the government of God—that he cannot connive at sin, or approve of a sinner who is destitute of the principle of holiness or new obedience. 'It is faith that works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.' 'The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God' Faith establishes herself on the cross where the display of the moral perfections of God and his government are consummated. She divorces the heart from sin, and reconciles it the obedience of the law, with all the force of moral omnipotence. The light, therefore, which would let us see the perfections of God harmonize in our salvation without faith, is a false light, and the belief of it the belief of a lie. But I will suppose for a moment this light is true (though it has appeared to be demonstrably false). On what evidence does the spirit establish his credit, or the credit of his faith? How does it appear that he is not an impostor, a spirit of delusion, a spirit of darkness, and not light? How does he prove that the light is not mere matter of imagination, opinion, or presumption? Where are his miracles, his prophecies, his consent or agreement with the whole system of grace? Where are the evidences of truth and purity? I see none. No peculiar or exclusive trait in his character—no decisive evidence of his divinity. The gospel which I offer to your faith is not so. It is the word of the spirit proceeding from the father and the son, attested by miracles and by prophecies, which

have been and are accomplishing at this day before our eyes. The light given here is reduced to record. The miracles, the prophecies, and the records have been laid open, have invited and sustained the inspection and criticism of friends and enemies for ages, are still open to the same critiçism. The record disclaims and forbids your faith till the works, the miracles, or divine attestations of the author's mission have been fully sufficient to satisfy the mind that he is a messenger sent from God. 'If I do not the works of my father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.' 'If I had not done among you the works which none other man did you could not have had sin.' The comforter who abides with us forever, in whose awful name I preach the Gospel to you, is cloathed with all the evidences of his divine authority contained in this book, and witnesses or testifies nothing else but what it contains. It contains the whole counsel of God. You cannot believe the testimony of the spirit on record with every conceivable evidence of his truth and divinity, but you can believe a spirit without credentials, without precise or definite proposals, without offering himself to your investigation, or his doctrines to your scrutiny: Or you cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, till this untried and unknown spirit has attested a proposition contrary to his word, and then you can believe him. You would ask with infinitely more reason for a candle to see whether the sun was risen when he blazed with meridian glory in the sky.

All these observations apply with equal force to every other kind of spiritual operations antecedent to faith.

The third article of the covenant offered to your faith and reflection to-day by the great God, is essentially connected with the second. It is that he will lead you by his counsel, keep what you commit to him, and bring you safely to glory. This article of

the covenant supposes that you submit yourselves to the government of his law and the disposal of his providence, in full confidence that his law is holy, just and true, and that his administration is conducted with wisdom, goodness, mercy, and faithfulness.—This is usually matter of faith in the initiatory stage of the christian life. Sinners take refuge from wrath in the gospel, and enter upon a course of obedience partly through gratitude, and partly through necessity. What they at first knew of the law only by faith, is presently explained by experience, by observation, and by reflection. In christian practice the law of God will soon discover its tendency to personal and general happiness and perfection. When the mind is rescued from the government of blind passions and appetites, and engaged in pursuits as boundless as eternity, and as extensive as our capacities of enjoyment under the direction of a father whose counsels are ever wise, the thoughts of the heart are exalted, and all the powers of the soul enlarged. Its faculties acquire strength by exercise, enlargement by contemplation, and refinement by the spiritual and sublime nature of the objects with which they are conversant. It soon appears that were men generally governed by this law it would revive the face of nature. The very earth would yield her necessary increase with less toil and hazard to the husbandman. Social enjoyments, unmixed, would acquire a relish unknown to the present distempered times. Disease and death would lose most of their terror. Strife, and the guilty passions subservient to it, being laid under Almighty restraints, peace would run down as a river, and righteousness as a mighty flood. Even this is the hiding of the power of the law administered by the divine mediator. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. The christian is only in the pupillage of his nature here—only acquiring an education in the school of Christ to prepare him for the station he is to fill, the exalted exercises and enjoyments on which he is

about to enter, and the enlargement and growing strength of his faculties in the immediate vision and fruition of God and the lamb. This is what filled the good David with heavenly transport. 'O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth.' 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.' 'Thy testimonies are wonderful, therefore doth my soul keep them.' 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' 'The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.' 'The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.' 'Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them is great reward.'

I am aware that many will find a refuge from this article of the covenant, by alledging that it cherishes that selfishness which is opposed to the universal benevolence of the christian character. It leads us to the love of God because his laws and statutes are profitable to us, instead of acquiring that *infused* benevolence which reconciles the heart to sin and death, and and even hell, for the glory of God, and which binds our hearts to every other creature in proportion to the degree of holiness of which it is possessed, and allowing to ourselves only that share of love and attention which is measured out to us on that common scale. The glory of God being an object of such superior magnitude, personal interest and gratification, or self, is lost in the view of the sanctified mind.

Never was a distinction more unhappily conceived than the distinction between religion and irreligion as consisting in benevolent and selfish affections. Every government that ever was established among rational creatures on earth, or in heaven, is built on the irresistible propensity of every creature to pursue the greatest good, and shun the greatest evil. Every penalty of every law, human and divine, and every reward promised to obedience, supposes this principle

in our natures, and all authority rests upon it. Could men, angels, and devils, divest themselves of the government of this principle of self-love, the laws and government of God would be perfectly nugatory.—Mercy and judgment, heaven and hell, blessing and cursing, would be words without a meaning. If our greatest gratification were in promoting the glory of God it would be no sacrifice but the indulgence of a selfish and unreasonable passion to wish ourselves accursed from Christ for our brethren, or for any thing else we might fancy would promote the glory of God. It is inconsistent with the goodness of God, and the reason of man, to divert his pursuits from the advancement of the happiness and perfection of his own nature, destined to immortal growth to the promotion of the glory of God, which never can be of service or an object worthy the pursuit of either creator or creature only as it promotes the happiness and perfection of the creatures. A governor who would himself prefer or require his subjects to prefer his glory to their emolument, especially to their happiness and perfection, would tarnish the lustre of his name, and draw down contempt and derision on his head. A government which has in view any other object in its administration, inconsistent with the happiness and perfection of every unoffending individual in the government, is corrupt in its very foundation. Every pure government is administered solely for the good of the subjects of the government, and this is the glory of the governor.

That God should promote his own glory indeed as a mean of perfection and happiness to his creatures, is not only consistent with purity, but his government would be weak and contemptible without it. His laws and institutions flow from the perfection of his nature, and from those perfections flow all the happiness and perfection of his creatures.

But if you represent the glory of God as a mere gew-gaw to gaze at, neither profitable to God nor

man, for the promotion of which he saves or damns his creatures indifferently, and requires us to choose heaven or hell as it will serve to promote that glory. If you represent him as having brought sin into the world, directly or indirectly, by exertion or neglect, with all its train of evils in this world and the next, to promote that pageant glory, you represent the government of God the most corrupt and impure government in the universe, provided you judge of corruption and incorruption by the original notions of right and wrong among men And if you attribute these principles to his government while you call it holy, just and true, you pervert and abuse language. What other men call cruelty, you call goodness; what common language calls impurity and corruption, you call purity and simplicity: And truly, before men can understand you, and reconcile your ideas of God and his government to justice, mercy or truth, they must have new perceptions, tastes dispositions, understandings, and new physical and moral natures. And when all these changes are affected he will be ten times more the child of the devil than he was before. He will be perfectly out of the reach of all government human and divine. Secure in beholding this fanciful glory of the Lord, the sanction of no law can affect him. He is literally twice dead, plucked up by the roots.

The confession of our faith represents the matter in very different light. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. We behold his glory and are changed into his moral image. We display his perfections to others, it has the same effect on their minds. Our Lord never thought of any opposition between our spiritual emolument and the glory of God. 'And ye will not come to me that might have life.' Nay, he came into the world to glorify God, and God is more glorified in the cross than in all the works of his hand. 'But God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that

the world through him might be saved.' It was the respect to the recompence of reward that reconciled Moses, Abraham, Paul, and all the cloud of witnesses of the truth to the self-denial, affliction and persecution of their christian warfare. Fear not, therefore, my brethren to trust the reconciliation of your hearts to him, to his law, and to the faith of his gospel.—When once freed from the bondage of sin by the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, you will not fail to love, admire and adore. He will put a new song of praise in your mouth, and you will understand the song. Your ideas of his perfections will coincide with the original notions of perfection among men.

The fourth and last article of this covenant offered to your faith and acceptance, is the resurrection from the dead, and eternal life. There is a rest provided for the people of God, and you are invited to partake of the first fruits of it to-day as an earnest of the heavenly inheritance which will be made over to you on the absolute promise of God, if you will only accede to the terms of the covenant. The promises are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus to those that believe. By the faith and cordial acceptance of this concluding article of the covenant you will find rest from the stings of your conscience, the wounds of your spirit, from the yoke of iniquity and the government of your passions and appetites, from the uneasiness of uncertainty on a subject of such vast importance, from the vanity of human things, and from that moral imbecility under the pressure of which you are ever learning, and never coming to the truth, ever resolving on amendments, and continuing in the same practice, or rather changing from bad to worse, and advancing from a fearful, irresolute course of sinning, to hardness of heart, scaredness of conscience, and alienation of the mind from God. The prospect of that immortal inheritance will be as a sure anchor cast within the veil, to secure you from being tossed about by

every wind of doctrine, from sinking under sorrow, and becoming the dupe of the devices of the devil.—You will appear to yourselves as pilgrims and strangers in a strange land, not because you enjoy the gifts of a good providence here less than others, but because you have so immensely rich an inheritance in reversion. Having this hope you will purify yourselves from idols and run your christian race with alacrity, and the whole word of God will be as the voice of the spirit sounding continually in your ears, 'This is the way, walk ye in it'

I know the religion here described will be thought mercinary, or as it has been expressed by divines, 'a working for life, instead of working from life.' This mistake, like many others, arises from a philosophy both fal e and vain—a philosophy that has never entered into the very obvious distinctions between disposition and will, passion and affection, imagination and judgment. A philosophy that has never formed any distinct idea of moral and religious principles. A philosophy that has never noticed that the choice of the heart and the affections are governed by reason and judgment, dispositions and passions, by sensation and imagination. All the objects of rational choice are mercenary in the same manner. Every moral, political or civil principle is formed by a fair examination of the objects of pursuit or aversion, with their several relations and consequences. Hence our will is very commonly directly opposite to our disposition or inclination, and in the formation of every principle we form a resolution not to be governed by disposition, sense or passion, but by what upon fully examing the subject we judge to be most conducive to our interest or advantage; so in the government of God he promises to make it infinitely our interest to live no longer in obedience to our appetites and passions, but in conformity to his law. In full confidence that God will accomplish what he has promised, he believes it to be infinitely best for him to keep God's

law, and therefore steadfastly resolves to keep that law as his greatest interest. This choice or resolution, built upon these promises, is his moral or religious principle. Every other rational choice is formed in the same manner, and every species of principle may be traced to similar operations of the mind. In this sense therefore the conduct of man is mercenary so far as he is a rational creature, and religion must be mercenary so far as it arises from a knowledge we have of the will or perfections of God. This objection is therefore futile whether it be in the mouth of an infidel or a divine. All religious and moral principles belong to the understanding, and nothing is an object of estimation in the understanding but what tends to the greatest attainable good. And upon the well known existence of this principle in our natures all laws and governments are founded; and it is by the operation of this principle all improvements and amendments of practice or of purpose proceed. Passion and appetite, the only springs of action different from reason and understanding, are naturally blind to all considerations but the qualities in the objects which influence them. You can never amend or improve them. You might reason till dooms-day to persuade your taste that sweet is bitter, or bitter sweet, with the miser to persuade him gold is useless and tasteless, with the conquerer that power and glory have no charms, or with the sensualist to convince him that sensuality has no attractions. The understanding may lay them under restraints, principle may controul them, and their force may be weakened or strengthened by habit, but their nature can never be changed. It would not be difficult to prove that all the vices of men arise from the indulgence of these appetites and passions, and neglecting to refer the government of their lives to the decisions of their reason and understanding; and that men instead of choosing what seems to them the greatest good, when they indulge themselves in crimes, choose not

at all, but submit themselves to their dispositions instead of their wills.

However you call it mercenary, or working for life, God has offered a great reward to those that fear him, and he acts irrationally and impiously who has not respect to it.

Fear not, therefore, my brethren, to receive on the promise of a God the hope of eternal life, and calculating on it as your inheritance, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Look up to God through this covenant in Jesus Christ, to a reconciled Father, religiously endeavouring to walk before him with a perfect heart.

I have now stated the general terms of the covenant proposed by God Almighty to you to-day. I have now nly to add in his words, 'choose ye this day whom ye will serve, God or Mammon.' I stand in awful apprehensions for the issue of the treaty. As an ambassador for Christ I would entreat and beseech you to be reconciled unto God. But I fear you will make light of it. Men have acquired such sagacity, and are so habituated to search out and shelter themselves in refuges of lies; the present time is so strongly inclined to scepticism, and the knowledge of the truth is so wrapt up in mystery and inconsistency; the prevailing spirit of division and disputation, and the unsettled state of every religious and moral principle offers an asylum every where to the awakened conscience, and a shelter from the weapons of the gospel. After all I fear you will demand, 'If he is willing why does he not make me willing to embrace his gospel. If he is unwilling to be reconciled to me, I can never change his purpose or alter his mind. All power was given to the son that he may bring many sons to glory. Why does he wait to be gracious? Why does he not accomplish his will?' If he were as willing as he is able the work would certainly be accomplished. Why do you torment me before the time? Why do you insult my wretchedness by

representing my danger from which I cannot fly more than a dead man? You call it the means of grace, to persuade me. What, will you persuade a blind man to see, a dead man to hear and obey? To what would you persuade me to believe a *lie*—that he will forgive and receive me to favour, while from his suffering me to continue in sin, there is reason to believe he will not? Or would you persuade me to pray in unbelief, in enmity to God, who is unchangeable in his purposes, and there is reason to fear, purposes of eternal wrath by the decree of predestination?'

No, my brethren, God is love; his tender mercy is over all his works. He does not will the perdition of any man. He has predestinated none to condemnation, but such as he foresaw would reject his counsel and neglect his grace. Neither does his foreseeing the event, impose any necessity upon it more than his seeing it at the time or knowing it after the crime is committed. He has reprobated none but such as reprobate themselves, and he beholds their self-reprobation with all the regret that consists with the infinite perfection of a God. All that shall believe in the son of God through his written word are given to him of the father, and he will keep them and lead them to his holy hill. The spirit is come according to his promise, and is expressing the thoughts and purposes of his heart by his written word to us, which is the only cause that can beget faith, and it is fully adequate to the end only as men make it void by their traditions, by obstinacy, by caprice, and by inconsideration All power is committed to him indeed, but he will not offer violence to the human will. It is not the object of power. Take away the liberty of choosing what appears on the whole best, you destroy it. This is the very power of which we are conscious and by which we know it exists. The very idea implies liberty. To be free and under the constraint of Almighty power at the same time is just as much the object of power as to be and not to be at

the same time. If you ask farther why he does not let in the necessary light into your understanding, the answer is the same. You shut your eyes, harden your hearts and alienate your minds. Nothing but violence to your will would prevent it. If you perish you perish self-destroyed by the abuse of the powers essential to your nature. No my brethren, were the government of the human will the object of physical power or of irresistible constraints, there would have been as few aberrations in the moral as in the natural world. Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, would not have been established by settled ordinance forever, and he for whom they were chiefly ordained left to rove like a wandering star. The author of all, who has established perfect order and regularity in the natural world, did not less delight in moral order among his intelligent creatures, nor did he neglect any means of preserving or restoring it that consists with its moral nature. He who gave his only begotten son to the death that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life, did not neglect any means consistent with our natures to prevent our fall or restore us when fallen. He never would have trusted the glory of his creation to a liability to fall had the stage of their existence and the state of his government admitted of placing them in a state of infallibility in a consistency with their moral natures. He never would have suffered man to displease him so highly that it repented him he had made man. Nay, if the human will was capable of physical or coercive government, man in sinning must have done just what God designed he should. All the declarations of love and goodness, the law, the promises, the sacramental test, &c. were mere illusions practised on the innocent and unsuspicious creature to conceal himself, while behind the curtain he rendered them ineffectual, and by his Almighty power plunged him into sin. If God directly or indirectly governed the will then or now, to make every act just what it is,

every declaration of general goodness and mercy are contradicted by every sin committed. If the sinful actions of men are rendered necessary by causes originating in the divine will, then his will is a direct contradiction to his word. 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' It is further urged that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and therefore cannot be reconciled; that man is dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore cannot be made alive without quickening power, &c. It is true the carnal mind is enmity against God, but that enmity is itself a proof of the practical power of the gospel on a carnal mind. We are enemies to God in our minds by wicked works. The root of the enmity of the heart against God is the consciousness of sin, the apprehensions of divine displeasure, and the reluctance to part with sinful pleasures or pursuits. Now, who did ever know that God had established a holy government, that we are immortal and accountable creatures, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Human nature might forever leave these questions undecided To most of men they never were or would have been any question if revelation had not suggested them, and to the greatest philosophers to this day they are as uncertain as before the enquiry was ever made, only as the authority of revelation establishes them. Nor can you conceive of any principle of opposition between God and man in any other character but that of a governor. Let any man suppose God to such an one as himself, approving of sin, he will have no enmity or opposition of nature against him. Two can walk together if they are agreed. If God never had established a government among men which laid restraints on their passions, appetites, &c. there never would have been any enmity in the carnal mind against him. If they had never known that he had established such a government the effect would have been the same.—They never would have had enmity. Their wicked works could have never awakened any apprehensions

of his vengeance in their minds, nor could his laws have laid any restraints on their passions, and therefore no enmity could have been formed in their human hearts against God. But the knowledge of God as a holy governor is known only by the revelation of Jesus Christ believed. The partial faith of the revelation of Jesus Christ is therefore the foundation of the enmity of the carnal mind against God, and the effect produced is perfectly conformable to the proposition believed. It begets enmity. It affects the heart. It alienates the mind from God. Now there is not one proposition in the gospel system more opposite to the inclinations and passions of men than the principles of this enmity, and yet the understanding breaks through the restraints laid on it by the passions, and lays hold of these truths, painful as they are, and treasures them up in the mind. The understanding can therefore surely break through the same restraints, and avail herself of other parts of the system for the same reason. The understanding is not necessarily the dupe of the passions. It is not necessarily governed in its disquisition by the passions or appetites. What happens in our moral life happens every day in common life. Every man is in enmity against those who oppose his purposes or pursuits, and obstructs his views or desires, and he is never reconciled by his passions or appetites But no man is rendered incapable of understanding, believing, or acceding to terms of accommodation, provided he can discover it will be greatly his interest. We have the very same power to command our attention and reflection to truths proposed to our thoughts, that we have to shut or open our natural eyes or ears; and though we have no moral or religious knowledge, we are not for that reason incapable of receiving instructions from Christ. Though we cannot pardon ourselves, we can receive pardon from God. Though we are in spiritual beggary, we are not for that reason unable to receive the gift of grace at the hand of God. To re-

ceive by faith is to receive as a beggar. Christ is induced by his goodness and mercy to give, and we by our wants to receive. Now, if the belief of God's displeasure on the account of sin is the occasion of enmity, the belief of forgiveness and eternal life will beget reconciliation. If the restraints upon our passions beget opposition, the prospect of eternal happiness as the fruit of obedience will occasion love and expectation. It is true the gospel cannot reconcile the passions to the restraints of religion, but the gospel believed can reconcile it to our minds to lay those restraints on the passions which it requires. The christian is not destitute of passions and appetites, but he governs them. He is not indifferent to his greatest good or highest interest, but for the attainment of his immortal interest he is reconciled to deny himself the gratification of his appetites and passions. This reasoning is supported by the experience of every man every day he lives. We are not the less capable of receiving and believing a truth because it is disagreeable, of consulting our interest notwithstanding our passions, or of making our escape from danger because of our reluctance to exertion. You will not refuse a potion at the hand of a physician because it is bitter, disbelieve him because he thinks your case dangerous, or refuse to submit to his directions because he tells you the mortified member must be cut off. It will be said, 'these are natural things.' It is true, but your souls are in the hand of a spiritual physician, who can neither mistake the case nor the cure. It is the same mental faculties, attended with the same principles of opposition, with which he has to deal. Now I know of no art or device by which you would so effectually disappoint the hopes of a good physician, as by insinuations to his patient that he did not design to perform a cure, that he administered inefficacious medicine, or that his judgment was false in your case. And are not these the very arts practised on the patients of the

physician of souls from day to day. It is thought this theory derogates from the glory of God. What, does it redound to the glory of God that he cannot prevail upon his creatures to believe on his word, his promise, his oath and word sealed with the blood of his only begotten son; that he ca. not prevail upon them to be reconciled by the pains of hell and the happiness of heaven, without offeri g violence to their will and bringing them to his measures by force? that he cannot conquer them by love, but must resort at last to physical power? Is it necessary to the glory of God that he has established a standing means of grace, which never was or can be effectual to regeneration or conversion, from which, as nothing is to be accomplished, he must resort to his power? Is it necessary to his glory that he sh uld condemn the souls to hell for the ineffectual use of ineffectual means? It is vain to say they would have been effectual if they had not been resisted, or had they not been blind or dead This is o.ly to say they would have been effectual had the patient not been diseased, or it is to renounce your creed. If that resistance was necessary, that necessary resistance was the disease; if not necessary, then other power than that of the gospel is not necessary. Does it advance the glory of God to issue a proclamation in the most general terms any language admits, of pardon and reconciliation, while he by secret reserve designs it only as an occasion of aggravated condemnation to multitudes? Do you think it redounds to the glory of God to wait to be gracious when nothing hinders but his own will? When there is nothing to wait for but himself, as none can effect any thing? Is it to his honour to declare all things are ready, and to expostulate, saying 'why will ye die,' when nothing is wanting but his own exertion of necessary power? It is vain to say what the sinner should do. He can do nothing but offer up the abomination of unbelieving prayer, as unacceptable and unprofitable as if you offered

swine's flesh or cut off a dog's neck. Is it to the glory of God that he should cause the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision to live, rather than destroy them because they had not raised themselves?

You think it is attributing merit to man to attribute to him the power of receiving eternal life as a gift of God through the gospel. It is indeed attributing to him the merit of ignorance, guilt, and enmity against God, and of receiving knowledge, forgiveness and the principles of reconciliation from him, by means established by God himself for that purpose. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Faith which cometh by hearing the word of God, excludes all boasting of which God has any jealousy. What hast thou that thou hast not received? is a scriptural question; but what hast thou that thou hast not been forced by Almighty power to receive? is the question substituted in the room of it by modern refinements. Do you think it is to the honor of God to shed light on a blind man and condemn him to hell because he cannot or will not see? Do you think it is to the honour of God to offer the terms of a covenant to a dead man or to an unborn child, and then condemn them because they have not acceded to the covenant? The blindness which you attribute to man is not ignorance, or information would enlighten him. It is the want of the organ of sight. It is not the enmity which arises from the influence of sin, or the government of the passions or the motives of the gospel would reconcile him. The death is not the want of gospel principles or the faith of the gospel would form them. You therefore attribute to man natural weakness of intellect and natural incapacity to govern his life by divine principles. The gospel is therefore the savour of death to a blind man for not beholding the light, &c. You will therefore, I hope, my brethren, recede from such absurd and dangerous ground, on which you rob God of the glory and man of the privilege of

the gospel, and receive him through it as your saviour and deliverer.

I have now endeavoured to shew you that the new birth is a spiritual or moral birth. That it is wrought in the heart by his written word in its appropriate powers. That the spirit never was promised or given to perform any immediate operation, till 'after man had believed,' and that the new birth never was ascribed to any immediate agency; and that his immediate agency in the heart never imposed necessity. That the new birth consists in the faith of the gospel. That this faith neither presupposes nor admits any antecedent change of disposition, by new taste, perception, or exercise, nor light let into the mind. That had any such taste, perception, exercise, or light been formed in the mind, it could have been of no use in the christian practice; and if it had governed the life it would have been a life of indulgence instead of a life of faith and self-denial. I have proved that the antecedent light in question is a false light. That religion does not consist in divorcing our minds from the pursuit of our greatest good, but from the obedience of our passions and appetites in the pursuit of that greatest good. That this religion is no other wise mercenary than every other choice of the heart which follows the last dictate of the understanding. That the reason why all are not regenerated is not because God wills the condemnation of any man, but because he will not offer violence to the will because that violence would destroy it and its moral nature. I have proved from the enmity of the carnal mind against God, that it is capable of receiving and believing gospel truth, and that the truth believed will have an effect on the heart and life corresponding with the truth believed. I have endeavored to prove that this doctrine attributes no merit to man but the merit of ignorance, guilt and depravity, and robs God of no glory but the glory of resorting to violence from intellectual means, and conquering a worm of the dust by his power. That the opposite doctrine

represents the proclamation of grace in the gospel both false and insidious, or meaning nothing at all. The light shed upon the world by it nothing but light to a blind man—the punishment of unbelief unjust and cruel—and that it makes God the author by positive purpose and decree of all the sin and all the sorrow in this world and the next—that he established the natural order of his material and animal world by settled ordinances forever, and established the moral world in everlasting disorder and misery—and that the offers of grace in the gospel are not to be regarded as the act and deed of a faithful God, but what every infidel will admit them to be, a series of moral precepts which you cannot practice, of facts and promises which no man can believe, and mysteries which no man can understand—a book which for the same reason you must admit to be useless to the world.

Cease, therefore, my brethren, to impeach the mercy, justice and truth of God, by your vain excuses. He is just when he speaks, and clear when he judges. Admit the testimony of Jesus Christ as certainly true. Without further hesitation receive him as your prophet, your priest and your king. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Seek him and he will be found of you. And I entreat you to close immediately with the proposal. I do not mean rashly and inconsiderately, but I mean without unnecessary delay, having counted the cost, dug deep, and laid your foundation on the rock Christ Jesus, and with an honest heart commit yourselves to him in well doing as to a faithful creator. Here I must take my leave of you whether you will hear or forbear. I leave you as a physician a dying man, who cannot prevail with him to take the only medicine that can cure him. I fear I have not prevailed, but I leave you with the hope, perhaps the vain hope, that you will reconsider the proposal, and accept it before it be eternally too late.

[CONCLUSION OF THE SERMON.]

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

Synod of Kentucky.

The Moderator of the Synod of Kentucky.

REVEREND SIR,

I CONSENTED the more readily to publish the sermon above written because you dis-approved of it. If the doctrines be false, I have no desire to maintain them to my own perdition—I pretend to no personal infallibility, nor to the immediate direction of the infallible spirit. If you, or any of the body, over which you preside, can only satisfy my mind, that you are under his immediate direction, in your interpretation of the scriptures, your system of faith, or in your practice, I will never dispute or reason one word more with you, but sit down as an humble scholar and imitator at your feet; but if you are mere fallible men like myself, exercising your limited understandings in enquiries into the meaning of the scriptures, with the same infallibility of which I am conscious, you will, I hope, indulge me in meeting you on the same ground. On the other side, if the doctrines above asserted, be true, it is of great importance that you and the synod over which you preside, knew it. The discourse is not wholly the same, nor wholly different from what you heard from the pulpit; as it was originally an extemporaneous production, it was impossible to recollect it precisely, either in matter or form—it is now designedly less devotional and more argumentative.

In that I had carefully shunned all controversy. In this, I have neither sought nor shunned it, but without respect to names or opinions have endeavoured to sweep away the doctrines and commandments of men which seemed to me to make void the word of God, or to obstruct the practical belief of the gospel. You will not perceive, perhaps, that I have conscientiously attended to your admonition "to speak cautiously on the subjects contained in the discourse," because your language was ambiguous. I could not tell whether you meant that I should carefully adhere to the phraseology of our Lord and his apostles, and be cautious of departing from their manner; or that I should be cautious of a departure from your manner and the common manner among the members of Synod.—Though it is probable you meant the last, I chose to enterpret it as if you had really meant the first; because I thought our Lord and his apostles were higher authority; and besides, you did not seem to me to have formed any distinct ideas on the subject, or to have adopted any fixed mode of treating it.

When I asked you whether you thought the new birth was the effect of mediate or immediate, physical or moral operations of the spirit you evaded answering. Now as this new birth is the very root from which all religious practice springs, and the knowledge of it the foundation on which all moral and religious reasoning is built, it would seem as paradoxical that an adept in christain science should be at a loss to explain it, as a scholar should be at a loss to tell what is the first letter in the alphabet. Resting on what I had heard from the pulpit, at your commission of synod, what I found in books written by your approved members, and in books I suppose approved by you, I was involved in still greater uncertainty. At the commission of synod I heard regeneration stated as a work of the spirit of God, antecedent to, and seperate from the word, and wrought by the spirit, without respect to the will of the crea-

ture; not of blood nor of the will of man, but of God; and if any one asked how may I know that it is the spirit of God working in me? I cannot tell, said the preacher, Christ did not tell Nicodemus. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth,' &c. Another preached in your hearing at the same place, 'can the awakened sinner believe the gospel?' He blessed God, many there knew they could not believe till the spirit had let light into their minds, to let them see the wisdom, justice, truth, righteousness, and grace of God all harmonize in their salvation, and then they could believe. The letter from a gentleman to his friend in Kentucky, represents faith as "a holy disposition wrought in the heart of a guilty sinner by the spirit of God." The monitor represents it as the fruit of holiness. Several other treatises have given similar representations. A writer in the Gospel Magazine, represents it as a new perception. In the same work the opinion of Mr. Blair is raked up from his ashes, to show that it is something wrought in us by the spirit of God; but we do not know, at the time, that it is the spirit of God, but it shews itself afterwards, by the fruit. Dr. Edwards, in the history of his own conversion, represents it as a new taste for the glory of God, by which the sinner is reconciled to the sovereignty of God, whether God should save or destroy him. Hopkins, improving on the hint, represents regeneration as consisting in the infusion of benevolence into the mind, which extends itself to God, and his glory as the greatest good, and then to the several grades of holiness, in the different orders and individuals, in proportion to their several degrees of holiness; and as God is supereminently holy, the regenerated must love him so well, that he would be contented to be damned to all eternity, if the glory of God required it. This system, I am credibly informed, is adopted by many members of your synod. Mr. Davies says, regeneration consists in a superadded faculty, and elsewhere in an un-

essential adjunct; and contends (as I am well informed, and indeed I have to write most of these particulars, either from information or memory,) that the rational life can form as little judgment of the spiritual life, as a horse can of a man, or a wheatfield of a horse. Dr. Witherspoon contends that it is the work of the spirit, antecedent to, and seperate from revelation; and when men define it, they generally call it a moral change; but it turns out a natural change, under their hands. Now sir, as I do not know that you have ever rejected any of these opinions, & generally esteem all these writers, as well as speakers sound divines, I suppose I have a right to consider them as your sentiments. If you meant in your admonition that I should cautiously avoid a departing from your manner on this great subject, what sentiment shall I select from this farraginous mass? What leader shall I follow? I see no common trait in your characters, no common sentiment in your doctrines, only that you all agree in professing to understand it; but when you attempt to explain it, you all agree to bury it in mystery and the most perplexing inconsistency. If it is an inexplicable mystery, why do you attempt to explain it? If it is explicable, why do you not select the true explanation and reprobate the rest? How shall I answer an awakened sinner who demands of me what shall I do to be saved? This is no impertinent question. I have been in the habit of imitating our Lord and his Apostles. I have uniformly directed them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promises of grace in him; assuring them that the promise was to them from God himself: and I have explained the natural and necessary effects of the belief of the gospel truths from the well known powers of the human mind—powers the operation of which every man, good and bad, experiences every day, and for this I am called in question by you. Now, therefore, I demand what shall I say to awakened sinners? Shall I tell them they cannot be-

lieve till the spirit has wrought a change in them, quite independently of their will; for they are born not of the will of man but of God? And if any one asks how he may know that it is the spirit of God that works in him? I cannot tell, Christ did not tell Nicodemus. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou heareth the sound, &c. Or shall I tell him he cannot believe till the spirit has let light into his mind to let him see all the perfections of God harmonize in his salvation, notwithstanding he is in unbelief? Shall I tell him he cannot believe till the spirit has given him a new disposition, which is to govern his life? Or that he must be holy in heart and in life before he believes? Must I tell him that he must have a new taste which will reconcile him to the sovereignty of God, though he should condemn his soul to hell for his own glory? Or that he must be willing to be damned provided it will promote the glory of God? That he must have an antecedent and seperate work of the spirit, which no one can tell whether it is a natural or moral change? Which, or how many; or must I inculcate the necessity of all these before the awakened sinner dares to take refuge in a promise? To assure him he cannot believe the promise of forgiveness and eternal life till these changes take place, must be false doctrine. The experience of all mankind, good and bad, and of every intelligent creature proves this. The testimony on which he is convinced of sin, is the same on which he is invited to believe for forgiveness and eternal life. Nothing can hinder the awakened sinner from believing these promises, but such suggestions as those above noted. He is excited by all the propensity of his nature to shun misery and choose happpiness. The only question is whether this faith will be presumption, or whether the belief of these promises will work mightily in him, as it wrought in the Apostle Paul; or whether the hope it inspires will purify him from idols. I demand further, what I am to tell them

is the sign that this antecedent work, whatever it be, is wrought in them? Is it by seeing, feeling, emotion, exercise, laughing, singing, dancing, jerking, or what else; or is it a holy life? 'I will show thee my faith by my works,' but these works are to be wrought without and before faith. This is no exaggeration. These are the very doctrines which have been preached, and the very directions which have been given to the awakened multitude in the revival; a revival which promised every thing to the hope of those who could place a dependence on gospel truths. Awakened sinners were docile scholars. Had they been taught the truth, they would certainly have embraced it as they did delusions. But when such an incoherent, multifarious and unintelligible jargon was represented to them as a necessary preface to their learning Christ, or submitting themselves to his instructons, which were written on purpose that they might believe, not with a presumptious faith, but that they might have life through his name. what could you expect but that the ignorant multitude would open their minds to strong delusions? What guide had they to direct them, or what rule of discrimination between imagination and the work of the spirit? You must have been short sighted indeed if you did not foresee the divisions, distractions, delusions, in short the humiliation of the church which has arisen from a perverted and abused revival. What shall I tell them to do till this antecedent work is performed? Pray, strive, agonize, wait on in unbelief? O happy preaching! Till you were agreed what this prefatory work is, till you could describe it minutely, so that none might mistake it except by neglect; would it not have been as safe only to have been as wise as was written, and imitated the Apostles in that great revival which they led so successfully, preaching Christ to them that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified by faith that is in him?

This, Sir, is my apology for publishing the obnox-

ious Sermon. I have thought, and do think that the doctrines you patronize are obstructions to the faith of the gospel; that no man can believe in a consistency with them till he has cured false premises by false reasoning, or till he has destroyed the force of his theory by a correspondent delusion. Do not think, sir, however, that I have the most distant design of impeaching the religious standing of any man who makes a credible profession of religion. I have no such design. But theoretical and practical principles often clash, as we shall see, elsewhere. If I am mistaken you will not attribute the mistake to the love of party. I have no party, nor to the desire of leading a party. I have conscientiously shunned both. This very publication has been extorted, and if ever it appears to me that I am in an error I shall retract every thing I have said without a blush.

You will now, I hope, indulge me in a privilege which I am sure you would be ashamed to deny me. I mean the privilege of canvassing public measures, and the conduct of public men in the church. It is at least as necessary in the church as in the state. Wisdom in her counsels, firmness and impartiality in her administration is as necessary to her welfare as purity in her principles and practice. I approve of the zeal which you have manifested for the purity of the church, but I cannot think you deserve the same praise for consistency, impartiality or wisdom. The legs of the lame are not equal. I cannot but observe your halting. Had your zeal been uniform you could not I think have overlooked the absurdity and inconsistency, and still less the mischievous effects of that mass of unsettled and inconsistent opinions which have been preached with such ruinous consequences for nine years past. In the commission of synod you heard without censure an attempt to expunge the idea of divine foreknowledge from the word of God and from the counsels of Heaven. You heard with patience that the foreknowledge according to

which mankind were predestinated was love, that is distinguishing love, such as God Almighty exercises to his own people. 'The Lord knoweth those that are his.' And in other passages knowledge is used figuratively for love or covenant relation. It followed that election according to the foreknowledge of God was an election according to the love he had for some in preference of others before he made any decree or decisive choice. The preacher did not indeed shew that when our Lord was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God to be crucified with wicked hands, it only meant that God delivered him by his determinate counsel, and out of the special love he had to those who crucified the Lord of glory. But you were satisfied. You might have noticed also that the doctrine of permission was pointedly denied, though an express doctrine of the confession of faith, and you were not fully satisfied with me because I admitted it in that famous examination which you should have converted into a familiar and friendly conversation had you been well acquainted with the constitution of your church. You might have noticed, I think, that if God's decrees were all positive and absolute he was as much the author of sin as of holiness, and therefore as we judge of his moral nature by his government that unholiness preponderates in his own character as much as it does among his creatures. In vain will you attempt to evade the force of this observation. If the decree and the execution of the decree be positive in the holy and unholy acts of men, the one is to be attributed to him as well as the other. The holiness in the one case is attributed to its author, and for the same reason the sin in the other. If we are required to bless the hand that gives us faith by a positive decree, we for the same reason execrate the hand that gives us unbelief in the same positive and irresistable manner. It is vain to talk of holiness when unholiness is the designed effect of posi-

tive decree and exertion of power. Actions in all characters speak louder than words. The action of the Deity is to constrain his creatures by his Almighty power to choose holiness in a few instances, but in most unholiness.

But if you could digest all these, which indeed seem to me to require strange digestive powers, you must have seen in an anonynous publication on predestination and permission, well known I suppose to have been written by one of your members, a fervent ejaculation to God Almighty, that the gospel had never been publised, if it restored to man the capacity of sinning after the fall. The same opinion had been published before by two of your members; but this gentleman has certainly made a great improvement, both in the strength and boldness of the thought, when he dared to express it in the form of a prayer to God himself. As you are in the habit of examining, I wonder you did not, for the sake of consistency, and to preserve the appearance at least of impartiality, ask him why, in the plenitude of his benevolence, he had not prayed that there were no God, or at least that he had never established a moral government among his intelligent creatures. This would have effectually precluded the entrance of sin into the world, for where there is no law there is no transgression; or if there are certain essential laws arising from the relation between Creator and creature, independently of the will of God, and therefore binding on the conscience, whether God will or not, as some suppose, even these would have lost their power if there had been no God; then might men have "rested in the embraces of a propitious eternity," without being cursed with existence. Such questions would not have been unreasonable. Many divines have been of opinion that it would not have been consistent with the mercy and goodness of God to have continued our race in existence, if he had not designed to send a saviour into the world; and some had thought De-

vils and fallen men of course were in a state of outlawry—no obedience required, as none was possible without an offer of grace; our Lord however is very express upon the subject. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin." "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." And "this is the condemation that light is come into the world". It will not affect the force or application of these passages, whether you interpret them positively or comparatively. They must mean at least, that the gospel had restored men both to a capacity of sinning, and a state of responsibility, with certain limitations and exceptions. Indeed every moral, religious, political, or other establishment among fallible creatures, constitutes the power of sinning. You can never conceive of God or a government, but you behold the capacity of sinning and the state of responsibility among fallible creatures. As the gospel is probably the greatest possible effort of divine munificence to man, so it confers the greatest possible power of sinning heinously and aggravatedly on those to whom it is published. As the condition on which the writer's prayer was suspended is true, the prayer is absolute. It would not exceed the zeal which you have manifested on some other occasions, if you had inquired whether the ejaculation was devotion or blasphemy.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

T. B. C.

APPENDIX.

AS the doctrines I have been endeavoring to defend are borne down with such a mighty current of prevailing opinions, the authority of great names, and I suppose, the power and authority of most of the churches, it will not be improper to take some further notice of the ground on which their opinions are built.

Before I enter upon a distinct consideration of the several foundations, described by popular preachers and writers of the present and last century, I will answer a question triumphantly asked, as if it were unanswerable. "Can a man believe in Jesus Christ of himself?" The question is absurd, and built upon a false hypothesis. Would any man in his senses ask whether he could believe his neighbor, who told him his house was on fire of himself? Does any one imagine believing is an independent act? Can any man believe a proposition, not otherwise known but by testimony, without testimony? Can any one disbelieve credible testimony? Does not the power of believing depend upon the credibility of the testimony as much as the seeing of the eye depends upon light and the object seen? Or hearing on the sound which is heard? The only question which could be asked pertinently to this purpose would be, whether I, who cannot but believe my credible neighbors witness, can believe the witness of God, which is greater? If indeed you shut your intellectual eyes, or close your ears against either, by whatever means you effect it, you can be ignorant of, or disbelieve the fact re-

ported by either God or man, but you can disbelieve neither otherwise. Faith is the gift of God, as it is the effect of his word; and eternal life is the gift of god as it is the effect of his promise believed. And "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," is a passage on which great reliance is placed by many in support of the contested doctrine. But the whole force of this passage consists in the assertion that a natural man is a man on whom this mystical regeneration has not been wrought.—They take the proposition in dispute for truth, and then argue from it; but I demand whether a man who has no other knowledge than what he acquires from reason, independent of revelation, is not properly to be called a natural men? Whether a heathen man and a publican are not natural men? Whether the Greeks, to whom the gospel preached was foolishness, were not natural men? Whether the princes of the world, who did not know the truths of the gospel, of whom the Apostle is speaking in this passage, were not natural men in this sense? No one can pretend to draw any support to this cause from the passage any other way but by supposing that the natural man must be a man destitute of the contested regeneration, and by supposing that he cannot be taught by the spirit through the word. Both these are the very propositions contested and proved by the context not to be the meaning of the Apostle. And had it not been proved by the context, I have at least as much right to insist on the interpretation here given as they upon the opposite. But as the meaning is ascertained by the context the passage militates against their doctrine. I have noticed this passage, because it is considered as the main pillar of the doctrine, and especially that it may serve the reader as a key to unlock the most or all the texts of scripture which will be urged against the doctrine for which I con-

tend. Almost every one derives its strength from a construction which never would have entered into any man's head, had not his mind been first perverted by some such hypothesis. It appears, therefore, in spite of every reason and ~~all~~ little hypothesis, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It is by the promise we are made partakers of the divine nature. Christ sanctified himself that we and all who believe in him through the word delivered by the Apostles, might be sanctified by the truth.—The Apostle Paul would have been ashamed of the gospel, if it had not been the power of God to salvation to them that believe. But there is no where the most distant hint of any agency of the word distinct from the spirit, or any other way than as the intellectual means by which he works on intelligent creatures, or of any other use than as it conveys to us the knowledge of the truth as it is taught by the spirit, as his mind is ever unchanged, so is his word. It expresses the truth, and abides for ever as a fair draught of the thoughts and purposes of his heart. The moral and religious changes among men flow from the mutability of men, and not from any change in him or his word.

But let us examine the new birth as it is described by some of the popular speakers and writers of the present and the last century. The first I shall notice is that in a letter from a gentleman to his friend in Kentucky Page 11. 'Faith,' says the writer, 'is a *holy disposition* wrought in the heart of a guilty sinner by the spirit of God.' This, I believe, is a definition of faith perfectly original. Faith has been ascribed to a new principle of spiritual life, immediate operations, &c. but to make it a new disposition, literally or figuratively, is I believe a new thought. Faith and disposition have always appeared to me as distinct ideas as light and darkness. The figurative use of the word disposition may indeed mean the choice of the heart in consequence of a full investigation not

of the agreeableness or disagreeableness of an object, but of its eligibility without regard to its agreeableness or disagreeableness. But the disposition here stated is used in its simple sense, for ~~it is a~~ disposition ~~of~~ faith If faith be a disposition it is a disposition arising from taste, appetite or perception, without knowing or believing the truths on which any calculation is made by the understanding to determine the will. But faith and simple disposition are often at variance. A man is often forced by testimony or other evidence to believe what he is strongly indisposed to admit as true. A criminal at the bar is disposed to believe that he shall be acquitted or pardoned, but his disposition has no effect on his belief. If faith be a disposition it must have whatever God reveals, whether blessing or cursing, for the object of its gratification. It must be a very new and singular disposition indeed. An awakened sinner is equally gratified, I suppose, in believing that the wrath of God abideth on him, and in believing that God will forgive him; for the object of faith is the word of God, and both the one and the other is the object of his faith, and of course of his disposition. What a sweet disposition the devil must have if faith be a new disposition. He is disposed, though he despairs and dies in hell torment, to receive the information that God will punish him forever. Little credit does Gabriel in glory deserve for his disposition. What reprobate on earth or imp in hell is not disposed to be eternally happy and glorious. But there is a further mystery in this disposition. The friends of this system generally find it a difficult task to persuade awakened sinners to embrace the promise of mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Such is the peculiarity of this disposition that they are disposed to receive a message of wrath but not of mercy. Infatuated with the love of wrath and hell they hug the burning boon in their bosom, but spurn the waters of consolation. If mystery, or what is the same thing, inconsistency,

agreeably to modern interpretation, be an evidence of gospel truth, this doctrine is well supported. It has ever been thought that perdition and destruction were objects of aversion to every intelligent creature without exception; and forgiveness has ever been esteemed agreeable to the guilty, liberty to the captive and sight to the blind. Our Lord certainly knew nothing of this disposition. 'If I do not the works of my father believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the father is in me.' 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' The mere belief of Christ in the doctrines he taught on the mere credit of the evidence he gave, without any regard to this fine disposition, just as men believe in other cases, forced by evidence quite independently of either will or disposition, as every species of believing is produced, will render the promise absolute. Had it been a disposition, miracles or other evidence would have had as little tendency to produce it as the power of a machine would have to produce conviction. It is a false and unfair statement to invite or urge us to believe our Lord's promise of forgiveness on account of the evidence of miracles, if he will not forgive in case we believe on account of those miracles independently of all disposition. Neither would obedience, as the mere fruit of disposition, ever pertain to the nature of gospel obedience. That obedience is always the fruit of knowledge, of calculation, and expectation, from the approbation of God.

Edwards is a name I mention with reverence. But who is Edwards, or any other who departs from the simplicity of the gospel? Edwards ascribes regeneration to a new taste, (as well as I remember—I have to write from memory) infused or formed by the spirit. By this he is reconciled to the sovereignty of God whether he will save or condemn him. And Hopkins

and his followers have magnified it so that religion consists in such zeal for the glory of God that a man must be reconciled to be damned to all eternity if the promotion of his glory requires it. This opinion seems to me to have tinctured more or less all the prevailing opinions of the times, and has concealed, disguised or consecrated all the enthusiasm and delusions of most churches to the present day. In our present fallen state it is thought we have no taste or relish for divine things, but in the new birth this new taste is formed in us by which we relish and distinguish divine things. We love God and his ways and hate sin.

The pleasures of religion then are the pleasures of the imagination. Taste ministers those pleasures as the external sense of tasting ministers the pleasure of sensation. The pleasures of religion, therefore, like other pleasures of the imagination, consists in the the gratification of this taste. Like a taste for poetry, painting, music, gardening, architecture, &c. Good God Almighty! And is the religion of Jesus become a mere pleasure of the imagination! a mere gew-gaw! the play-thing of an idle hour! the beguiler of tedious time! a mere rattle or a doll! Instead of the sublime prospects it opens to our pursuits, and the awful sanctions of its laws and the holiness of its institutions, it recommends itself to us by the beauty and excellency of virtue, the symmetry and proportion of its parts, the grandeur and sublimity of the whole. How my heart burns to hear the glory of the cross frittered down to metaphysical gibberish. Its force on the heart and influence on the life lost in the visionary dreams of a heated imagination and the distraction of ungoverned passions. Its omnipotent motives buried under the rubbish of mystical hypothesis, containing obvious and acknowledged contradictions, and inexplicable mysteries, which represent God as cruel, unjust, unmerciful and unfaithful, making proposals of grace

to which we cannot accede, damning us to all eternity for not doing what we can no more do than a child unborn, no more than a dead man can perform the duties of social and active life. Mysteries which represent God as swearing he delights not in the death of a sinner, but that all should turn to him and live, expostulating "what could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done?" and yet when the secret comes out the real reason was he never designed, prepared or willed their salvation, but by a positive and irresistable decree had predestinated these very men to hell for his own glory; and had no other design in all these declarations but to undo them and sink them to the lowest hell for rejecting this gospel! And now to crown all in regeneration, he has given men a new taste, so that they can relish all this because the sinner sins voluntarily and is not sensible of the chain by which he is bound to perdition and sin; but though the renewed man knows all this, his new taste can relish and pronounce its goodness, mercy, justice and truth. In the name of God I demand where is your authority for introducing this new taste antecedently to faith, or for forming your judgment after you believe in conformity to this inexplicable power, distinct from and superior to the reason and understandings of men? Will you suffer it to supplant your conscience and your knowledge and judgment of the law of God? Will you suffer it to dictate to your judgment and choice before what your own understanding and the common sense of mankind perceive to be justice, mercy and truth? David indeed says, "Come taste and see that God is good. The statutes of the Lord are sweeter than honey from the comb." But he uses the phrase figuratively, for he tells us the reason of his love and respect to the laws of his God. They convert the heart. They make the simple wise. Moreover they thy servant warn, &c. But this taste acts antecedently to faith, and therefore

without knowledge, reason or judgment. The mind has no knowledge of God or his will till it has acquired it by faith. If it has any resemblance to any other sense or taste, external or internal, its power is exerted on its objects independently and separately from the understanding. Every other sense is the ultimate judge both of the sensible qualities and of the agreeableness and disagreeableness of its object, but no taste forms any idea of its relations or tendencies, and of course of its eligibility. This is a question which belongs exclusively to the understanding whenever she interposes her authority. Does this taste, unlike all others, sit regent on the throne? Does she dictate to the understanding, the will, and the affections? How does she support her high pretensions? Has she any peculiar credentials, any unquestionable title to the sceptre? Is she unerring in her decisions? Does she uniformly dictate the same lesson? Does every one possessed of her speak the same language, relish the same truths, and drink the same consolations from the wells of salvation? If this is not the case she is an erring guide. Her statutes require the revision of the understanding. If her decisions are contrary to the plain dictates of common sense, and the common notions of mankind, they ought to be rejected. It is the object of false taste. A taste therefore for the glory of God, which glory is supposed to consist in what is esteemed cruelty, unfaithfulness, the love and countenance of sin, indeed the forcible introduction of sin into the world, is a corrupt taste. It dishonours God, and cherishes the vices of men. It strengthens the hands of unbelief, and shakes the faith of the enlightened christian.

Modern investigators have surely forgotten that religion, in its principles, its operations, and enjoyments, is purely intellectual. It begins in the understanding, governs the will or choice of the heart, fixes the affections, and governs all the appetites, tastes,

passions, imaginations and opinions which either belong or cleave to our nature. It exhibits to our view the awful gulf of hell, that we may escape from it; and it offers to our pursuit the most substantial and everlasting enjoyments with the most perfect assurances of success. Its motives or incentives to spiritual action are not merely the pleasures the good man has in the acts of obedience. The christian life is a life of self-denial, and in the performance of most of his duties he has to deny himself the gratification of his taste, appetite and disposition. The pleasures and principles of religious action arise from the hope of the great reward and the approbation of his God. The approbation of a God whom unseen he loves—in whom, though now he see him not, yet believing, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul.

Mr. Miller, in his retrospect of the eighteenth century, page 31, and his friend in the additional notes, page 453, have enlisted themselves with Doctor Edwards on the side of moral necessity, in the famous question of liberty and necessity, and of course on the side of immediate operations of the spirit in regeneration. A work so deservedly celebrated, and an opinion supported by such great names, requires particular attention here. The reader and the learned author will pardon my attempting to investigate this subject. It seems to me a subject of vast importance. It essentially affects the morality and responsibility of man. Necessity reduces man to a mere machine. Doctor Mac Whorter, to obviate the force of this objection, says, mechanical religion would suppose the use of instruments or machinery. I think if the doctrine of necessity be true, man is himself the machine or instrument emitting sounds in perfect correspondence with the bow with which it is struck, with as little spontaneous and independent agency as the string when it vibrates, and with as

little moral merit or demerit as the fiddle when she is tuned to other notes. If grace be bestowed or withholden by causes originating in the divine mind with as little respect to the use or abuse of men's reason and privileges as in the giving and withholding of broad shoulders or a tapering leg, I think with Hume, these are as really moral virtues as the gifts of grace which you have or want, and by which you are made holy or unholy independently of all spontaneous intellectual, moral or immoral motion. If our moral motion commences by the same power and agency by which our earth was first put into motion, and by the same divine hand, all our future actions governed by external causes like the earth in her orbit, I see as little place for praise or blame in the conduct of men, as in the revolution or aberration of the earth in her orbit. It does not change the ground to say that we are intelligent creatures, for that intelligence has no power of spontaneous action but the mere capacity of being dragged at the wheel of necessity, passively and without the least power of resisting. Every volition or intellectual action independent of any spontaneous power of action or re-action, must necessarily be what it is. The praise or blame therefore rests upon the head of him who made it what it is, and not on him who could not alter it. The two great deistical patrons of necessity, Hume and Godwin, seem to me more consistent in rejecting revelation, than Edwards, Priestly and Miller in embracing it.

Mr. Miller is certainly mistaken in representing the Calvinistic divines as adhering to a doctrine of predestination which implied necessity, as it is held by Dr. Edwards. The only Calvinism with which we are concerned is contained in the confession of faith. The confession is clear on this subject: Conf. chap. 3d. "Yet so (predestination is to be defined) as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the

liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." And chap. 9th. "God endued the will with natural liberty, that it is neither forced nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to do good or evil." Compare these passages with the sum of saving knowledge and the practical use of saving knowledge in the Westminster confession, and you will clearly see that the doctrines I am here advocating, both with regard to regeneration and necessity, as well as the subordinate doctrines I have treated and shall treat in these investigations, are the doctrines of the reformation and of the confession of faith which I and others have adopted by solemn vows, however it may accord with modern refinements.

But let us examine the foundation on which these great men build their doctrine of necessity. If I rightly recollect and understand Dr. Edwards, his principal dependance is placed on man's desire of happiness. Amidst all the objects that occur to his thoughts he will necessarily choose what seems to him best upon the whole, otherwise he would choose evil for its own sake. The will necessarily follows the last dictate of the understanding when she has been in the act of deliberately comparing, judging and preferring what, all circumstances considered, appears to be the best. If the will does not choose what appears in the view of the understanding the best, she must establish that volition upon an antecedent volition, and that volition upon another for the same reason, and that on another ad infinitum.

Now the force of this argument rests upon the continual and strong impression on our natures to follow or choose the greatest good. To this principle the infallibility of the will in its following the last dictates of the understanding is ascribed. Now if this principle of desiring our greatest good constrains the will unerringly to choose what in the view of the understanding appears to be the greatest good, it will

certainly bind the understanding by the same tie to exert her faculties to the utmost to discover what is the greatest good. It would amount to little to impose a necessity on the will to follow the last dictate of the understanding, but to leave the understanding at liberty to dictate without enquiry, reflection, or deliberation. It would be as inconsistent with the instinctive desire of happiness, as for the will to relinquish the greatest apparent good for the enjoyment of the moment, for the gratification of a passion, an appetite, &c. Besides, the understanding is under the controul of the will. We in many cases pursue an enquiry in obedience to the will which we pursue with reluctance. If the will necessarily chooses the greatest apparent good, she will choose the utmost exertion of our faculties in all cases to discover and judge what is that greatest good. If she does not it is plain she must choose less than the greatest good, that is evil, for a blind and unreflecting understanding must be a blind and dangerous guide. If this original and instinctive principle by which we necessarily choose our greatest good, binds the will irresistibly to choose the greatest apparent good, it will for the same reason bind the understanding to exert the utmost strength of its faculties to discover and select the greatest good without mistake. If you attribute fallability or neglect to the one, you with the same reason attribute it to the other. Dr. Edwards thought that the will invariably chooses the greatest apparent good, and I think it is proved, if she does, the understanding for the same reason will exert her utmost efforts to discover and select truly the greatest good. Now, if Dr. Edwards can prove that by the force of this original and instinctive principle, man necessarily chooses whatever he can discover to be his greatest good by the utmost exertion of his faculties, he will prove that man is absolutely perfect, and will stand acquitted at the bar of common sense, let his conduct be what it may. All the ho-

liness of principles or disposition, or any thing else, in any angel in heaven, with faculties equally limited, could do no more. In the infinitely perfect government of God real and apparent greatest good is the same to him who exerts his faculties to the utmost to discover his greatest good. The object of God's government is the happiness, and perfection of his creatures. Its tendency to happiness, and perfection is wrapped up in no mysterious state policy, or intricate and inexplicable designs. It rests on this single principle: The God that made us, and in whose hands we shall be forever, has promised that it shall go well with the righteous and ill with the wicked. The government is adapted to the state of the governed. Our Lord became a mediator on purpose to accommodate the government to the standing and capacity of fallen man. The principles and laws of the government are fully and fairly explained by the records of the court to which we have access. Were it otherwise a man might choose his greatest good with all the ardor and exertion of his faculties which God requires, and yet come short. But in that case common sense would attribute the fault not to the subject but to the government. It was not adapted to his capacity. Under the government of God therefore did man uniformly choose his greatest good and exert his intellectual faculties to the utmost to discover it; his mind would certainly settle on the law of God as his greatest good. It has heavier penalties and better and surer promises than any other object that could occur to his thoughts. But it will not be pretended that any man is perfect, much less every man, and therefore every man is not irresistibly and necessarily impelled to exert his faculties to the utmost to acquire the knowledge of the greatest good, and for the same reason he does not always choose the greatest apparent good. It will be vain to insist that the will must choose evil for its own sake if she does not choose the greatest apparent good. It is e-

qually obvious that a neglect to exert the intellectual faculties to acquire the knowledge of the greatest good is as inconsistent with the instinctive desire of happiness. The will has even more solicitations from imagination, passion, &c. and more opposition to encounter than the understanding in its researches.—Dr. Edwards' famous argument will therefore, I think, fall to the ground. If the will does not choose the greatest apparent good, she must choose less than the greatest good, that is comparative evil, for its own sake. If she does choose evil it must be the effect of antecedent choice or volition, and that of antecedent volition ad infinitum, which is absurd.—The argument will apply with equal force to the exertions of the understanding to discover and select the greatest good. If it does not in every case exert its utmost powers to make a just selection of the greatest good, it must be because a previous choice admitted inattention to the subject, that previous will an antecedent neglect of intellectual exertion, and that an antecedent ad infinitum also, which is absurd for the same reason that the will requires an antecedent will forever. By our absurdity we have proved that every man is necessarily impelled by the desire of happiness to choose his greatest apparent good, and for the same reason to exert his faculties to the utmost that he may discern his greatest good, and therefore we have proved that he is as perfect as it is possible for him to be with the limited faculties he has. If it be said the understanding exerts itself feebly, capriciously and occasionally, I will say the same thing of the will. She chooses the greatest good, but wills feebly, capriciously and unsteadfastly, and presently yields her consent to the importunity of the passions. But without this concession we have proved all men perfect, which I think of all absurdities the greatest.

Most men I think are conscious to themselves, and it is plain to others that they neither exert their

intellectual faculties to discover their greatest good, nor adhere firmly to what they do discover to be their greatest good. In both cases men sacrifice to their indolence, vanity, caprice, obstinacy, and other passions, what they know to be their greatest good. I question whether any man who has had access to the gospel ever rejected or neglected it because he really was convinced it was his greatest good to reject it. To me it seems their consciences, that is their understandings, are continually checking them and expostulating with them for neglecting that gospel which appears to themselves the greatest good. And they seem to me to be catching at straws all their lives to apologise or hold up some pretext to their consciences, though they know it is vain, for living in sin and unbelief. "*Meliora probo, deteriora sequor*," is a far more correct draught of human life, drawn by a hand rendered far more masterly on that subject by the impurity of his own life than good Doctor Edwards.

The patrons of necessity insist that all human actions are voluntary or involuntary; and they seem to me to have confounded disposition with will, and taste and passion with affections, and by that means to have wholly mistaken the seat of moral purity and impurity, and to have lost all idea of the difference between principle and inclination. They seem to me to have forgotten that the understanding has any other office but to be an everlasting dupe to blind passions, appetite, tastes, &c. which every wise man indulges or restrains indifferently as it accords with the purpose of his heart and the pursuits in which he is engaged. The understanding well informed from the word of God pays no court to passions, tastes, appetites, or their gratification. They are capable of no intellectual enjoyments. The approbation of God is the great object of the good man. This is the mine he springs—this is the wealth he covets—this is the renown to which his soul aspires—this is the desire

of his heart. He knows but little of the treasure provided for him. 'It does not yet appear what he shall be.' But so far as he knows he approves and admires the provision made for him, the immediate vision and fruition of God and the lamb, holiness, enlargement of his faculties, increase of his knowledgedge, enlargement of the field of enquiry, the society of the general assembly of the first-born on high, security from sin and sorrow, &c. All these and many others are purely intellectual. They recommend themselves to us by no blind instinctive feelings, no paintings of the imagination, and no transient gratification. Their worth is discoverable only by the understanding. The christian's faith and hope anticipate the enjoyment of them. His comforts abound not when he has felt emotions or passions, but when he is conscious that he is living by faith and bringing forth holy fruit, the only evidence he has that his faith is genuine, and his calling and election sure. Now it is the hope of these objects of desire that purifies the heart. It is the faith of this inheritance that reconciles it to him to leave father, mother, brothers, wife and children, or even life itself, to please his God. It is this prospect, accompanied with the fear of wrath, that enables him to choose the path of life. The power of choosing obedience to the laws of God is properly called moral power. God will accept the will for the deed where the correspondent action is out of your power. Now the laws of God prescribe self-denial, a course of action into which no man will naturally fall. The good man has a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. It is the same passions, appetites, tastes, &c. that governed him before he knew God as he is revealed by Jesus Christ. He could not restrain them. He was necessarily governed by them, and their alternate gratification was the greatest good he knew. But as soon as he knew God and Jesus Christ whom he had sent, he set light by them and their gratification. He

counted all things but loss and dung, that he might win Christ. Through this knowledge he is able to choose obedience to the law of God. He has good reason for his choice. He is an infinite gainer by it. It appears to the view of his mind not only his greatest good, but an infinite good. The will chooses it with no feeble and undecided preference. He chooses it as his greatest possible good, as his everlasting inheritance. As this knowledge so this principle which arises from it abides in the heart, and enables it, or what is the same thing, gives it moral power to uniformly choose obedience to God's law, without any other attraction but what arises from the knowledge of God and his government. This is the way the truth makes us free. Free from the government of appetites, passions, &c. The way the promises make us partakers of the divine nature. The truth sanctifies us—the gospel regenerates and converts us.—The law in the hands of a mediator converts the soul. This is the way faith purifies the heart, the way we live by faith and Christ liveth in us. This is the way we acquire power to become sons of God—to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. This is what sets our affections on things above. Affections are very different from passions. They consist in the respect, esteem, and attachment we have for what our understanding has examined and preferred as a comparative good. They are strong or weak according to the comparative value the understanding has set upon them. Passion is not so. It is inflamed by the imagination. It is antecedent to the understanding in its operations. It hurries on with the greatest eagarness to gratification. If it be restrained it dies or declines of its own accord, like a spent taper consumed by its own flame.

The love of God is in like manner purely intellectual. God and his government are not loved by instinctive feelings such as those by which we are attached to father, mother, &c. nor those partialities we

have for friends, because they accord with our views, are engaged in similar pursuits, or countenance our vices and follies. Who ever thought of loving a governor or government with such attachments. Such a love would be a reproach to the government. It would imply partiality or connivance at our crimes. The love of God is the discovery of positive perfection in his nature and government. It is kindled at the cross where all his perfections shine with the greatest splendor.

Now it is plain while the mind is stored with no knowledge the passions must govern the life. The man must necessarily swim with the tide. As he has no knowledge of any moral law, so his will has no respect to any thing but the gratification of his passions, appetites, tastes, &c. and therefore in a moral sense his will acts independently of God or his authority. His understanding dictates nothing to the will except ways and means of gratifying his prevailing passion or appetite. The greatest good is therefore indulgence and gratification of the passions. But when the mind is furnished with the knowledge of family or civil government the understanding calculates on a new scale. Prefers or selects the greatest good on new principles, and dictates to the will with new authority. The most agreeable is not the most eligible Agreeable and disagreeable respect the feelings and the enjoyments of the moment. The greatest good is discovered by examining what is solid, lasting, and productive of future happiness, as well as safety and enjoyment. The will then in consequence of this new calculation, chooses self-denial agreeably to the dictates of the understanding. For this reason every government is disagreeable at first sight. The passions are all in arms against it But when the subject is fully canvassed, and we understand the design of the government, the ills and calamities that are prevented by it, in consequence of the restraints laid on the passions and appetites, &c. we

delight in and approve of the government and the governor. He loves him as really for the firm and successful administration, as for the benevolent design or purposes of his heart. The case is similar with regard to the government of God. It is more strongly opposed by all the passions and propensities in our natures because it imposes a more universal and more coercive restraint upon them than any other government. But the understanding is not necessarily governed by the passions either in its disquisitions or decisions If it were, the last dictate of the understanding would be nothing else but the voice of passion. The will instead of following the last dictate of the understanding would follow the fisrt dictate of appetite or passion. No necessity therefore arises from the passions to force men to ignorance, unbelief and rejection of the gospel. It would be still more unscriptural and more unreasonable to charge God, who tempteth not any man, with imposing the necessity of unbelief on a sinner as he is responsible to God for his faith or unbelief. Man therefore, by indolence of thought, unnecessary indulgences of passion, and most of all by false opinions and traditions, which make void the word of God, rejects the gospel. So far is man therefore from possessing this desire of the greatest good, so as to induce a necessary choice of it in all cases on which the hypothesis of necessity is built, that we can trace the want of it to paradise, and most of the crimes of men to the same root. The tree of knowledge, of good and evil, appointed as a sacramental test, is a proof of it. Had he been necessarily stimulated by the constitution of his natute to the utmost exertion of his faculties to acquire the greatest good, no such memento would have been necessary Had the combined power of the sacramental test, the constitution of his nature, and the promise and warning given him, necessarily constrained him to exert his faculties to the utmost to retain the possession of the greatest good, he never

could have fallen. Had he duly exerted his faculties and kept up in his mind the truth God had revealed, with its incontrovertible evidence, he never could have believed satan or tasted the forbidden fruit.—Adam indolently and negligently remitted the mental exertion which his situation and the commandment of God required, and by it he fell. Were mankind fallen, as he is necessarily excited by the constitution of his nature to exert his faculties to the utmost to acquire the greatest good, it would never admit of one moment's hesitation, whether it is not the greatest good to know God and his will—'to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' God has therefore made adequate provision in the gospel for the faith and obedience of his fallen creatures only as they resist it not necessarily, but indolently, capriciously and inattentively in the exercise of that independent and licentious freedom the will has acquired by the fall.

I trust we will hear but little more of the instinctive propensity of our natures to happiness imposing a necessity on the will to choose the greatest good. It will be saying little for necessity if it does not constrain the will to choose the greatest good firmly, decisively and practically. If it does, it will certainly require the utmost exertion of the understanding to enquire impartially, deliberately, and uninfluenced by passion, imagination, &c. and therefore makes his life absolutely perfect as far as consists with the limitation of his faculties and the sphere of his action.

This view of the subject will I hope be satisfactory to all if I can prove that revelation and common sense unite in ascribing the power of believing to the credibility of testimony, and of obedience of a law duly established to the knowledge of that law.

On the first of these two observations I shall only repeat what I have so often repeated from the lips of our Lord. "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for

their sin.' 'If I had not done among them the mighty works which none other man did, they would not have had sin.' Had their incapacity of believing depended on any other cause but the want of credible testimony, their state would not have been altered by either words or the works of our Lord.

The power of obeying a law established with any proper authority, on earth or in heaven, has never been attributed by the common sense of mankind to any other cause but knowledge of the law, nor has any necessity of disobedience been admitted from passions, &c. but from ignorance or contrary motives. I will begin with the government of God. No man ever supposes that heathens, to whom the gospel was never published, are responsible for the rejection of the gospel. The reason is plain. Ignorance imposed a moral necessity of disobedience. He had not nor could acquire moral power to obey because he had not the knowledge within the reach of his faculties which alone could have enabled him to obey. Necessity justifies the violation of the laws of God. David profaned the temple and the shew bread and was blameless. Infancy, idiotism, dotage, and distraction, justify any transgression of any law in the eyes of all mankind. Human laws are subject to the same principle. Till the subjects can have at least constructive knowledge of the laws they are not held binding. Human laws make provision in like manner for necessity. Are you in the power of an enemy, and forced under the pains of immediate death to burn your neighbour's house, you are blameless. Do you take away his life in the belief that you cannot otherwise escape from his hand, you are acquitted. These are cases of moral necessity. But commit the same trespasses, and let it appear to be the effect of malice, design, or any other guilty passion, no one admits the necessity of obeying the passion. Moral power or weakness is therefore never attributed to passion, disposition, taste, or any natu-

ral or adventitious disposition, but to the informed or uninformed understanding only.

The same principles pervade every species of government. In family government the necessitarians as well as others adhere to the same rule. Masters of families, sons and servants are all equally acquainted with it If a servant or a son trespasses against you he will plead ignorance if he can avail himself of that plea. You admit it without hesitation if you can be convinced he had it not in his power to know. If the cause of the trespass was wilful ignorance, neglect, passion, or inclination, he will never mention it as a plea, neither would you admit it. The reason is plain. Inclination implied no necessity in the case. Your authority duly attended to by the understanding would have commanded the will.

The necessitarians are as far from admitting their peculiar sentiments into their solemn style as into the common walks of human life. Let us dictate a prayer in conformity to the principles of necessity, and see who dares subscribe to it. "O! Lord, thou hast by Almighty causes, originating in thine own will, constrained my father and representative to sin, and by the same Almighty power hast made me sinful after his image, and I have committed sin according to the good pleasure of thy will, for who hath resisted thy will? I am just what thou hast made me in nature and practice, by secret causes as irresistible as those by which I was created at first. For infinitely good and wise reasons thou hast caused me to hate thee and thy good laws, and I cannot but hate thee and disobey thee, but it is my crime, and shouldst thou condemn my soul to hell I must magnify thy justice, for it was only a moral necessity by which I was constrained to sin. And thou hast proclaimed salvation and published peace to sinners, and could I believe it as addressed to me who am a sinner? Thou knowest Lord I would return unto thee, but I do not know whether in thy secret purpose thou hast

not predestinated me to everlasting damnation, and therefore the belief of the promise is the belief of a lie, as I do not know but thy sole purpose in issuing that proclamation as it respects me may be designed to increase my torment for unbelief. I pray, therefore, if thy proclamation be true, thou wouldst cause me to believe it, but if it be false I must acknowledge thy justice in condemning me for not believing it." These good men of whom I have been speaking would be as far from adopting this prayer as any men, but I cannot see any inconsistency in it with their principles.

The doctrines of predestination and foreknowledge have been impressed into the service of the doctrine of necessity. The scriptural doctrine of predestination, and the doctrine of the confession of faith is as far from laying men under the constraints of necessity and offering violence to the human will, as the constitution of our natures. Men are predestinated according to the foreknowledge of God. We understand the decrees of God from the execution of his decrees. He will judge the world at last according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. In the eternal decree he had certainly respect to the same principles. His benevolent mind had certainly no enmity to the work of his hands.—He made them out of mere goodness. He is good and does good—his tender mercy is over all his other works. He did not will the perdition of any man. If he reprobated any in his divine counsel, it was not for nothing. No doubt he foresaw all the iniquity, obstinacy and rejection of his gospel as clearly as he will know it at the last day, and was and is now in as little suspense what he will do with the guilty as he will be when their sentence is pronounced. But he does not will their crimes nor their condemnation only as their crimes make it necessary. He uses every possible mean to reclaim them, with infinite faithfulness and sincerity, but offering violence to the human

will. That he will not do. The reason I suppose is, that it would cease to be a will if he forced it, and man would cease to be a moral agent or an accountable creature. 'He toucheth the hills and they smoke, the mountains and they tremble.' Did he interpose his Almighty power in our moral operations they would cease to be moral. Those who are not reprobated for foreseen sin in the eternal decree are elect in Christ Jesus.

The doctrine of divine foreknowledge is thought to imply necessity. Now I can conceive of no necessity imposed on any thing by foreknowledge more than afterknowledge. It is quite indifferent, so far as I can see, whether the knowledge of an event commenced at the time, a thousand years after, or before the event took place. Foreknowledge and afterknowledge agree in this also, that they must both correspond exactly with what takes place or they will be incorrect. Should God or man, were it possible, know that Jesus Christ was not crucified, that would not make void what has actually happened; and for the same reason had the divine foreknowledge been different from what really took place it would not have prevented the event from taking place, provided the same causes had operated with the same force as otherwise. In this case both the fore and afterknowledge would have been incorrect. The perfection of foreknowledge does not therefore consist in a divine decree to bring to pass the object of his foreknowledge, but it consists in knowing certainly what will come to pass, though the causes lie hidden in the freedom of the human will, and in the contingency of second causes.

But were the doctrine of necessity true, though I think we have proved it false, it does not follow that the immediate operation of the spirit is necessary in regeneration. Most men are placed in such situations in some period of their lives that were they necessarily to choose the greatest apparent good they

would necessarily choose to take refuge in the gospel. When carnal joys wither, earthly hopes and prospects closing, the few gratifications that remain tasteless, and those they expect poisoned with gloomy apprehensions, they could not but see that it is their greatest good to seek after abiding substance. If the greatest good commands their choice they must in this case choose what is really so. I can conceive of nothing that could rescue the mind in such circumstances from the force of Almighty necessity but the doctrine of immediate operations.—This either represents the greatest good as unattainable, or at least as doubtful, as the lot cast into the lap, with a thousand chances to one against you, and all your prayers, and tears, and repentances, have as little effect on the issue in the one case as in the other. It is said indeed that the sinner may pray, amend, &c. for he does not know that he is reprobated, and therefore it can have no influence on him. What then, is it ignorance and uncertainty that lays the foundation of my faith and of my correspondent purpose of and endeavours after new obedience? If the gospel only brings to light ignorance and uncertainty whether God will save or destroy, forgive or condemn me, I had ignorance and uncertainty enough without the gospel. If the gospel only tells me God will save some, but does not say whether he will save me, it will have the very same practical effect with regard to believing as if I had never heard of Christ. If the general offer of the gospel be not my sufficient warrant for personal and individual application I see no moral use or power in the gospel. If it is not a fair and sincere proposal of grace to me individually on gospel terms, I think it is to all intents and purposes made void. Of this quality it seems to me to be stripped by both the doctrines of immediate agency and necessity. But yet if the heart necessarily chooses the greatest apparent good, and our acceptance with God depends upon the choice of the heart,

then the circumstances above described supersede the necessity of that immediate agency which it appears to be the object of the hypothesis to establish.

Mr. Miller and his followers will not admit the force of this reasoning, because it is built chiefly on the dictates of common sense. Mr. Miller denies the appellate jurisdiction of the voice of the multitude, over the opinions of learned men, and for that reason I suppose he dislikes the phrase common sense, (see additional notes p. 450.) By the phrase common sense I mean something very different from mother wit. By common sense I mean the power of perceiving intuitive truth or self-evident propositions which, whenever they are fairly understood, carry conviction to the mind of their truth without reasoning or the intervention of other ideas to prove the truth of them. Common sense, when applied to a person, signifies one who is capable of perceiving and discerning this intuitive evidence. One who is possessed of this power is always able to reason with sufficient precision in the common and limited sphere necessary in managing the common affairs of life.—When applied to truths it means those self-evident propositions discovered by common sense. They differ from intuitive truths in this—that these are of greater extent. Intuitive truths are not always obvious. Many of them may be so retired that they have not yet been noticed by the learned or unlearned, and were they discovered, their authority might be questioned. The dictates of common sense are such as are obvious, and their authority generally acknowledged. Now I know no way of reasoning among the learned or unlearned but by comparing the proposition, the truth of which is unknown, by these dictates of common sense. It is true they differ from mathematical axioms, but the difference does not affect their certainty, nor the propriety of their application to discover other truths. The licentiousness of disputation would seem to me

to unsettle all truth and introduce universal scepticism were not the foundations of truth laid in the common sense of mankind. False reasoning consists in the unsettled and unprecise view of these truths as well as in the inaccurate application of them. Had we not the voice of the multitude as a kind of standard measure by which we could try over again their use and application in the several trains of reasoning we should be ever lost in error. Learned men copy mistakes from each other till they acquire general currency as if they were dictates of common sense. The doctrine of necessity, for example, which I have been examining, has not only acquired general currency, but has been acknowledged by its enemies to be demonstrated. Were it not for the dictates of common sense established by the multitude I do not know who would dare to dispute it.

But when we see all governments, human and divine, judges, fathers, masters, sons, and servants, uniting in one principle, that where there is no attainable knowledge of a law by the exertion of our faculties, we are guilty of no crime in disobeying it; that where the knowledge of the law is attainable by our faculties, disobedience is inexcusable; that passion, appetite, taste, &c. are never plead by subject, son, or servant, or admitted by a judge, a father, or a master, as an extenuation of a crime, much less to justify a transgression, when we see that no crime is attributed to disposition, provided it be governed by proper principles, and even the merit of self-denial and mortification is duly admitted and all moral merit denied to an action though good in itself if it is done merely to gratify a passion or appetite. And when we see the patrons of necessity acceding to these same principles in their solemn style and in the common walks of human life, I think it is fairly proved both by the dictates of common sense and the concession of its enemies, that all moral power and impotence lies in the understanding, and that no impotence implies

necessity when the object of the knowledge required is within the reach of our faculties; that when the knowledge is unattainable by our faculties, and we are necessarily ignorant, we are blameless, though we transgress the law, and therefore that no human action is sinful if it be necessary. And therefore that we can never be responsible for rejecting the gospel, if the spirit of God has not by his word brought it fairly within the reach of our faculties, and that no new perception, taste, disposition, faculty or impression is necessary but what he bestows by the gospel to those who receive it as it is in truth, not the word of man but of God. The patrons of necessity are surely mistaken in themselves. Actions speak louder than words. They surely believe the doctrine of liberty as we do. Their theories are only learned prating. I appeal to every one of these good and great men whether the consciousness and confession of sin does not imply that they ought to have done otherwise, and how could they have done what was impossible?

I will indeed admit that infinite motives have a moral omnipotence when they dwell fairly in the view of the mind. The heart will not trifle with them when they dwell as truth in the understanding. And here where we see them darkly as in a glass, their practical force will be in proportion to the clearness of our view of them. Even the malignant glance which the sinner takes at the gospel will have its effect in spite of all his resistance. Other motives enable the understanding to dictate to the will, but she dictates with authority only proportionate to the estimation she makes of the finite motive in her view, and in the gradual diminution of the value of the objects of her preference, her authority dwindles away till it becomes a mere cypher. Of the highest object of her preference she will reluctantly make sacrifices to the passions, but that reluctance will still decrease as the objects of her preference decrease in

apparent value till they are lost to her view, and the pursuit of them abandoned, and so far as it respects motives of little value the life is submitted to the passions without intellectual direction. I will not pretend to explain the self-determining or self-exerting power of the understanding or the will more than many of the effects produced by them, and though it must be admitted that the understanding is passive in the reception of her simple ideas through the senses, I think it is hard to conceive how the ideas acquired by reflection can be received in the same manner. Many of them are creatures of the mind only. Now, how they could impress themselves on the mind before they were formed in the mind seems unaccountable. It would imply agency before they are formed, and impression on their creator before they were created. It would seem to me, therefore, an inconsistency to attribute reflection and intellectual exercises to necessity or external causes, which inferred necessity of action, as the attraction of the magnet gives motion to the filings of steel. The intellectual motion or action seems to begin in itself, and to go out into the field of sensation or simple ideas in quest of what is good, useful, or agreeable, not merely in the ideas as they appear simply in the view of the mind, but as they may be modified by her active powers and by the application of her intuitive truths.

Now as the understanding is the seat of all moral power, truth is the great principle of moral amendment. The spirit of God is therefore offering himself to us as a teacher to lead us into all the truth, and to explain to us his whole will for our salvation. Blessed are they who submit themselves to his divine instructions.

FINIS.

SEVERAL LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE

REV. *T. B. CRAIGHEAD*,

IN ANSWER

TO A PAMPHLET PUBLISHED BY HIM,

CONTAINING

A SERMON ON REGENERATION,

AN ADDRESS TO THE SYNOD OF KENTUCKY,

AND

AN APPENDIX.

BY *JOHN P. CAMPBELL.*

"Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song:
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for him that made him."

COWPER.

LEXINGTON, K.

PRINTED BY THOMAS SMITH,

FOR THE AUTHOR.

1810.

ERRATA.

Page	Line	
10	2	from bottom, *for* cure *after* and the, *read* curse.
13	18	*for* and if it is, *read* and it is.
	13	*for* over, *after* parenthesis, *read* out.
18	12	*after* that, *read* it.
20	9	*for* remains, *read* remain.
23	15	from top *for* Nazareens, *read* Nazarenes.
25	14	*for* proces, *read* process.
27	15	*before* truth, *read* the
37	3	*before* truth, *read* the.
38	5	from bottom, *before* his law, *read* that.
39	6	*for* that faith, *read* the faith.
40	20	from top, *for* hopes, *read* hope.
43	14	*after* have you given, *erase* to.
45	20	from bottom, *before* an instance, *read* recording.
	9	*before* new taste, *read* a.
48	8	from top, *for* opinions, *read* opinion; *and for* "have tinctured," *read* has "tinctured.
50	2	from top, *before* confession, *read* the.
	5	from bottom, *after* renewed by, *read* the.
	4	*after* and, *erase* the.
59	7	from top, *for* establishing *read* established, *and for* authorize, *read* authorizing.
	20	*for* and threw, *read* he threw.
61	8	*for* disciple's, *read* disciples'.
	5	from bottom, *for* who *read* yet.
63	4	from top, *before* act, *erase* to.
	8	from bottom, *before* is immense, *insert* it and yourself
66	Note, 2	from top, *for* means, *read* mean.
67	13	from bottom, *for* dower, *read* power.
83	5	*for* summonses, *read* summons.
89	12	from top, *for* Tine, *read* True.
	5	from bottom, *instead of* all-working, *read* working.
94	11	from top, *erase* intellectual.
103	5	from bottom, *for* let uss, *read* lets us.
108	4	from top, *before* God, *read* to.
125	12	*before* christians, *read* other.
136	8	from bottom (note) *for* then, *read* there.
138	17	from top, *for* elevated, *read* elevated.
139	18	from bottom, *before* the words the socinian, *read* to.
159	13	from top, *for* Behemnists, *read* Behmnists.
	16	*for* Manechæans, *read* Manichæans.
171	10	from top, *for* yet spake; *read* spake; yet.

PREFACE.

WHEN Mr. Craighead's Pamphlet first made its appearance, I was of opinion that no notice whatever ought to be taken of it, through the medium of the press. I thought it not likely, that a production couched as it was, in language so severe and cynical, and not excelling in a luminous explanation of the subjects which it professed to treat, could be productive of considerable injury; and of course could not discern the necessity of an answer. I viewed controversy, generally speaking, as a great evil to society, and was unwilling to see the interests of lively religion, and the peace of the church, put to hazard, by an appeal to the judgment of the public, respecting the questions discussed in that publication. For these reasons I opposed, I deprecated any attempt at a reply to it from the press; but finding the work exceptionable, as it was making an impression upon some worthy minds, whose opportunities of information had not been the best, or whose pursuits had not allowed a regular investigation of those important doctrines which it calls in question; that it was pompously applauded by its admirers, as a pattern of argumentative excellence, and the very mirror of truth; that the enemies of the great doctrines of the Reformation manifested the strongest marks of satisfaction, and even betrayed symptoms of exultation on its appearance before the public; and that the imbecility of the Synod of Kentucky, was calculated upon by those who, captivated by the lustre of Mr. Craighead's talents, or proselyted to his opinions, felt a warm interest in the success of his speculations, I resolved to publish in opposition.

The Synod's standing and consequence were questioned! Who were they? Beings of yesterday, without talents, without distinction! Feeble winking tapers, who could not fail to be lost in the meridian beams of a certain great luminary! I found too it was made a question by some, whether the theology of the Synod were incorrupt, and whether they, as well as the divines of the last century, had not actually abandoned the doctrines of the Westminster Confession, and the early Reformers?—These were some of the questions which seemed to demand a prompt attention, and imperatively to urge a reply. When it became a doubt with persons under our care, whether we had not poisoned the pure springs of Reformed doctrine, and adopted a set of destructive refinements, which had been productive of all the enthusiasm and distraction visible in the late Revival, it was indisputable, something should be done to resolve the inquiry, and let them see where the stigma of apostacy in doctrine ought to fix.

This I have humbly attempted in the Letters now presented to the public; and all I have to ask of my readers, is a solemn, sedate and candid perusal; a careful examination of the scriptures and other books to which I refer, and a kind allowance for such mistakes as are incident to weak erring man in his best efforts to serve his fellow creatures, and especially to myself, who, from professional calls, and other circumstances, have had to perform a task so weighty, amidst a thousand interruptions.

Upon the whole, it is matter of gratulation to the church, that this gentleman has published his sentiments to the world.—Though he has not unfolded, as I conceive, his whole scheme of doctrine, yet so far as he has gone with clearness, he can now be approached with some certainty and effect. Written words are stubborn things, and speak for themselves, nor can they be explained away by that Jesuitical reply, "I did not mean so, you did not understand me"—*quae scripta manent*. And now that he has begun to develope his system, it would be desirable he should go on. The more he publishes the better. Error needs only to become fixed and tangible, to be repelled. While it is delivered in loose, vague harangues only, it can elude inspection, and if necessary, resort to its lurking places—it can shun the day, and hide itself in its kindred shades. You can not approach it—it is out of sight—it is gone, and you are insulted with the remark, "you are mistaken sir! you know nothing about it." But when printed, it cannot always be fugitive and ambiguous; in some instances at least it will be visible, and being tied down to a determinate point, can be investigated. Nothing can long exist under such circumstances, but truth alone, which has no occasion to fear the day, nor the onset of a thousand assailants.

LETTERS

TO THE

REVEREND T. B. CRAIGHEAD.

THE COTTAGE, March 22, 1810.

Dear Sir,

SHALL I, so much your inferior in age, venture to call in question the soundness of those opinions which you have lately presented to the world? Will it be deemed arrogant in one, who when but a child, saw you in the pulpit, and one who lays claim to none but humble talents, if he should undertake to canvass the opinions, arraign the doctrines, and demur to the representations and facts which have solicited the public attention in your pamphlet? Years I confess are against me, and with respect to talents, I assume nothing. No one will lay me lower than I place myself: and very solemnly do I assure you, that no person can more sincerely venerate your age, or more profoundly respect your abilities, than I do myself. But sir, you must allow, and the world must yield the truth of a maxim attested by long experience, that neither venerable age nor lustre of talents can secure fallible man from error. Too often do we see *age* trip in the path of enquiry, and powers superlatively discerning and vigorous entangled in mazes of confusion, lost in the intricacy of their own speculations: while the goal of truth is *safely* reached by the green in years—the unenvied in parts. It was the project of the youthful Scipio, not of the aged Fabius, that covered the standard of Rome with

a new and unexpected glory, and completely delivered her from the desolating visit of Hannibal. An instance of still higher authority presents itself in the transaction of Elihu with Job and his unfeeling friends. "I said, days shall speak, and multitude of years shall teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment."

There is a temper of mind every where recommended in scripture, which forms a prerequisite for discerning divine truth, infinitely more urgent, than either age, experience, or great and ruling talents: it is that which our Lord so well expresses by *being converted and becoming as little children*; and St. Paul, by a *spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind.* Without this we shall be in danger of erring in our pursuits after truth, though we possessed the majesty of Hooker, the vigour of Cudworth, and the penetration of Warburton. That you want, or that I possess this qualification, I would not be understood to suggest. I assert only its great importance.

I advance to the controversy with trembling. How awful the doctrines to be discussed! To understand them rightly is essential to the life of the soul; to mistake their import will be fatal. Life or death is the question, and bids us beware how we manage, how we decide the argument. Controversy "in its roughest mood" would ill become us. A contest for victory only, managed with fierceness and acrimony, blazoned with a parade of science and smartness of wit, or pushed on to the point of mutual injury, would wound us both, and do much to unsettle all those who might be unfortunate enough to mingle in our prejudices, or feel an interest in our quarrel. Very unpleasantly for the feelings of all sincere christians, and very unhappily for the cause of truth, religious controversy has been sadly conducted. The destruction of an adversary has been sought more than the overthrow of errour; the gratification of passion has been consulted, rather than the display of truth: false zeal, always blind to the issue of its own operations, has aimed more at the security and

splendor of its own fame, than the promotion of the glory of God and the good of souls. The consequence has been as might have been expected—melancholy enough. The peace of the church has been broken, and the public attention drawn off from lively religion; faithful and generous spirits full of animation, full of energy, have been lost to the service of piety; and the common foe that never fails to profit from these family feuds, has had but too much ground for triumph. Instead of rushing forward to the great and capital concerns of the ministry, the best men in the church have been compelled to pause in their grand pursuit, and turn aside to adjust points of difference. What detriment, what loss has not been sustained? nay, what mischief has not been diffused through the world by these contentions? It is in circumstances like these that infidelity grows bold in its pretensions, fanatic phrenzy, and shameless misrule urge their riotous career; and sober solid piety languishes for the bread of life. Frequent debating on the vast and awful subject of revealed truth, lessens that reverence which the mind should ever feel towards them, as well as represses the regard which is constantly due to the practical concerns of religion; it entangles the understanding and chills the heart; and what is worst of all, it banishes sweetness and serenity of temper, and produces in place of them, either a sullen unfeeling apathy, or a cruel vindictive spirit. None can fail to remark that those individuals, or those sectaries who are most addicted to controversial theology, are also most notorious for the cloudiness and confusion of their thoughts, the severity and gloom of their disposition, the intolerance of their zeal, and the impudent familiarity of their approaches to God and subjects the most sacred. It is the consideration of these things that makes me regret and even disgust controversy. Do you ask me then why engage in it? Rather ask, why does necessity require it?

There may indeed be seasons when results beneficial to mankind may arise from religious controversy. Such was the glorious reformation from popery, when the human mind made strong by oppression, and incited to a

bold enthusiasm, by the rising splendor of truth, looked indignant at its fetters, spurned its subjection, and dared to be free. The establishment of civil and religious liberty has been the happy consequence, as far as its effects have been generally felt. There are occasions too of less magnitude, when it is the duty of good men to contend for what they deem the best interests of truth and religion; when the great and capital doctrines of religion are called in question, when the opinions of the living and dead—opinions most dear to us, are injuriously treated, and exposed to public contempt; it is a time that justifies an appeal to the judgment of the public. And such I conceive is the present, otherwise I would not forego the pleasure of a tranquil retirement to meet you in the rugged thorny scenes of controversy.

I shall in this place observe to you, that I shall as much as possible wave metaphysical views of the subjects I mean to notice in your pamphlet: not because I think you very formidable in that respect, for it would seem, if I mistake not, that metaphysics is at least one part of science which you have not explored with much accuracy, and for which nature seems never to have designed you. Pardon me, sir, for telling you that you never were made for metaphysical discussions, and that you mistook your talent when you attempted them. There is a coolness of mind, a patience of research, a compactness of thought, a far beaming perspicacity, a promptness of recollection and extended comparison, essentially connected with success in such matters, and I think I do not detract from your merit, when I say these are prerequisites of which you appear to be in a great measure destitute. You are no Locke, you are no Edwards, you are no Butler!—but you are capable of being what I should covet a thousand times more, a Massillon or a Bridaine. No, sir, you have too much fire, too much velocity, too much impatience for metaphysics. You can manage a metaphor infinitely better than a syllogism; you can shape a flight on fancy's burnished wing with more ease than scale the proud heights of speculative philosophy. It is the sublime of eloquence and not the elevation of metaphysical theology

to which you ought to aspire. Oh! what might you not be under such circumstances as I could wish!

I am in principle opposed to metaphysics as applied to religious enquiry, and especially when we address ourselves to society at large, who have neither capacity, information, nor leisure to follow us in our speculations. Religion has seldom been indebted to this science, and *not unfrequently* has been deeply injured by it. In its main essential parts, religion is a plain matter of fact thing. It rests on divine testimony, demands our faith, solicits our love and claims our obedience. It is in no respect indebted to speculative philosophy for its rise, stability or dominion over the hearts and lives of men. It is true, religion as might be expected, involves many deep and difficult questions, and consequently affords ground for immense investigation. But who has not remarked that when men presume to scrutinize with too much minuteness and freedom such awful questions as respect the moral œconomy of Deity, the freedom of his actions, the reasons of his procedure, the origin of evil and the like, they will find themselves repelled in their enquiries, and their faculties confined to very narrow limits? If they have sensibility of heart, they will soon discover themselves awed, lost and confounded by the greatness, the immensity, the unapproachable splendor of the objects which they contemplate. What is this but the voice of God to us, what but the cry of weak, faultering humanity, warning us that things so strange, so majestic, so infinite, should rather be viewed with humble, silent admiration, than rashly approached by bold presumptuous speculation. In truth's vast temple, awful veneration and retiring modesty becomes us, rather than irreverent prying and saucy familiarity.

A few men such as Cudworth, Butler and Edwards have doubtless served the cause of religion by metaphysical researches, and have been themselves the ornaments of their profession; but in general, writers of this cast have done much to unsettle and even invert public opinion; and as to themselves, have for the most part fluctuated between a loose christianity and absolute scepticism. Even Locke

himself who was a christian, and who rendered essential services to truth in general, seems to have been injured by speculative researches, and in that way to have had his mind warped from the simplicity of religion.

The amiable Cowper, whose piety was as pure as his fame is unrivalled, thus addresses a friend on this subject. "As to metaphysics I know but little about them, but the very little I do know, has not taught me to admire them. Life is too short even for serious trifles; pursue what you know to be attainable, make truth your object, and your studies will make you a wise man. Let your divinity, if I may advise, be the divinity of the glorious reformation: I mean in contradistinction to Arminianism and all the *isms* that were ever broached in this world of error and ignorance. The Divinity of the Reformation is called Calvinism, but injuriously; it has been that of the church of Christ in all ages; it is the divinity of St. Paul, and of St. Paul's master who met him on the way to Damascus."*

In offering what I propose to remark on the opinions you advance in your pamphlet, I shall not reply to every thing which I deem erroneous, for that would be endless, nor yet shall I follow the order of your pages, but select some of the doctrines (and but one at once) which make a conspicuous figure in your scheme, whenever they occur and whenever I choose to discuss them. And that which I shall first take as the ground of a few observations, is what you have said respecting the enmity of the human heart to God and the root from which it springs.

As faithfully as I could I have endeavoured to possess myself of your opinion as to enmity in the hearts of men to God and his law, which appears to me to be, that it is the offspring of habit, superinduced by the violation of law, or in your own words, produced by wicked works. In page 29 you observe, "Wicked works is the root of the enmity of the carnal mind against God. Men are enemies to him in their minds by wicked works. We

* Hayley's Life of Cowper. Vol. 1. p. 307.

as rational creatures are not insensible of the value of an infinitely perfect government *only as we have rendered ourselves obnoxious to that government by sin.*" From this citation and what you elsewere say of "vicious dispositions acquired by habit," and of "wicked works which are the occasion of enmity to God and man." It is I believe your opinion that the enmity of the carnal mind to God is the unfortunate result of external disobedience, or actual transgression, and not the offspring of an original bias in our nature to evil. You profess to admire the Westminster confession, and to make it the platform on which your doctrines are built. To that standard then let us appeal with respect to the origin of enmity in the human heart, which you assert is *wicked works.* Speaking of the fall of our first parents, that confession says, "By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became *dead in sin* and *wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.* They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and *the same death in sin* and *corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity,* descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are *indisposed, disabled,* and *made opposite to all good,* and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." Ch. 6. There is the greatest possible difference between the doctrine of this passage and what we collect from your writings. While you hold wicked works to be the root of enmity, we find it here ascribed to an *original corruption of nature,* derived from a degenerate parent stock. This original corruption is the noxious root from which springs up all our *indisposition, inability* and *opposition* (enmity) *to all good,* God and every thing else; from which too, as the fruitful source, proceed all actual transgressions. And in *the sum of saving knowledge,* to which you particularly appeal for the correctness of your opinions, speaking of the consequences of the fall with references to our first parents and their posterity, it is said that they "became not only liable to eternal death, but also lost all ability to please God: yea, did *become by nature enemies to God*

and all spiritual good, and inclined only to evil continually. This is our original sin, *the bitter root of all our actual transgressions* in thought, word and deed." Yours, my dear sir, is the doctrine of the confession inverted!

The doctrine of human depravity as taught in the confession of faith, though humiliating to our pride, is nevertheless a just one. It is the transcript of scripture and fact. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil continually*. For the imagination of man's heart is *evil from his youth*. For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin; as it is written there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good; no, not one. But every man is tempted when he is *drawn away of his own lust and enticed*. Then when lust hath conceived *it bringeth forth sin*, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh *fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind*, and were *by nature children of wrath* even as others. For *from within, out of the heart of men*, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: *all these evil things came from within*. Gen. 6. 5—8. 21. Rom. 3. 9—12. James, 1. 14. 15. Eph. 2. 3. Mark, 7. 21—23.

You appear to be fond of exhibiting a discrepancy between modern preaching and that of Christ and his apostles; but where, sir, shall we discover any thing more variant, more contradictory to the doctrines of Christ and his apostles as taught in the texts now quoted, than the whole view which you have taken of the enmity of the carnal mind. From them we learn that *we are by nature children of wrath*, that we are transgressors of the Law of God and exposed to its penalty, by an evil tendency of our nature which leads on to sin and the cure attached to it.—You tell us that corrupt practices are the

occasion, nay, the very root of inward opposition to God and his law. From their testimony we are taught to, believe that the source from which evil actions proceed whether mental or not, is *within;* is *the heart with the lusts of the flesh and of the mind*—you contend that the source of enmity is *without*, is *wicked works*. To explain more particularly, our Lord declares in the passages cited from Mark, that lasciviousness or the lust of sensual gratification and covetousness, or an inordinate love of the world (which the apostle James says *is enmity with God) come from within or from the heart;* but you make enmity to be the result of habit and the offspring of evil practice. The impropriety of this opinion will be still more obvious if we consider that enmity itself, in the scriptural sense of it, is a wicked work. Thus in Gal. 5. 19, 20, we see it classed with other works of the flesh. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred," Greek enmity. We must then either conclude your notion of enmity erroneous, when you assert that wicked works are its root, or that things may be the agents in their own production.

In proof of your opinion, you hint at that passage, where St. Paul adverting to the original condition of the Collossians, says, "you that were some time alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." This passage cannot mean that wicked works were the instrumental cause of enmity in the minds of these converts during their unconverted state; for that would have contradicted the doctrine of this apostle every where else, and of scripture generally, which is, that *wicked works* take their rise like enmity itself in a dark carnal mind, and are the cause of nothing but the guilt and condemnation of the sinner. "Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." Eph. 4. 17—19. It is to a dark unbelieving

heart, that we *here* again see this very writer trace back the alienation or opposition of human nature to God, as well as all wicked practices in the Gentile world; and it it is therefore impossible he should have designed in the passage before us, to say, that wicked works were the root of enmity. But he did mean to remind the Collossians, that their former alienation and enmity of mind so clearly expressed by wicked works had been destroyed by grace and succeeded by reconcilation. The meaning will be clear if we read the passage thus, and the original you know sir, bears it: "You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind [En] unto or with wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."

It is no less the doctrine of fact and experience than of scripture, that actions whether good or bad, flow out of, and take their colouring from the inward movements and sentiments of the mind. The passions and affections of the heart are the springs of human action. It is on this principle that mankind pronounce on mental character from observations made on the conduct of *others*. Thus we constantly hear it observed, these and the other persons must have very bad hearts, otherwise they could not act as they do. And if it is on the same principle that we recur to some original taint, some radical vice in the constitution of man, when we see our whole race from the first moment of their acting, uniformly pursue the same wrong way, unless reformed by grace.

You are pleased, sir, to group (and injuriously too) over Edwards and Miller, with Hume and Godwin on the question of necessity; but if you are acquainted with writers of this cast, you will know where it is said that the corruption of the heart is factitious only, not original and inherent, being the result of corrupt institutions and evil practice. It is probable with me, you had no design to serve that hypothesis, but it cannot be concealed that your notion of enmity has a similar tendency towards subverting that leading doctrine of scripture, original sin. It would wrest from us one great and important source of proof—our appeal to fact. For if wicked works are the originating cause of enmity to God and man, as you have

said, then it will be vain to alledge universal example in evidence of an original depravity in our nature, as that depravity would be only the unfortunate offspring of a universally bad practice in the world. Any corruption of heart, nay, enmity to God and man in its most malignant form, would be but the effect of a bad life and of surrounding ill example. And this being the case, moral corruption can be no very dangerous, or unmanageable thing. The world have but to leave off sinning and obey God's law, and there will be no corruption of heart, or, if you please, enmity to God or man. Is not this the very thing you are inculcating with so much ardor, when you utter the passage on which I am now animadverting? Is it not the very inference you make from what you advance? We will hear yourself utter it. "Nothing, *therefore*, can tend more to remove the opposition of the heart, and inspire the love of the government and governor than *obedience to the laws.*"* p. 29. As wicked works generate enmity, so on the other hand *obedience to the laws removes opposition* or enmity and *replaces it with love.* To remove enmity from the heart and beget in it the love of God and his government, the grand mean is *obedience to the laws*, and that mean is superlative!—Nothing tends more!—What! not the amazing love of God commending itself to us in the death of Jesus for us sinners? not the glory of God shining in the face of a God-man-mediator? not the resurrection, ascension and intercession of the son of

* *Obedience to the laws*—This is an instance among many of the indefinite manner in which the author uses terms. From the word *laws* one might be induced to think that he intended other laws beside that of which he is at that moment treating; but it is very evident that it is the moral law only that he is considering. In the whole paragraph he speaks of it as *the law* and the *moral law*, states its requirements and defines its uses, under the first and second table, and formally holds it up all the way through as a looking-glass to his audience, in which they might contemplate their own proper image. And this done, he goes on to another subject, the consideration of the gospel as a new law. By *obedience to laws* then he must mean obedience to the moral law, or just what he expresses a few sentences before, "the best means of promoting the love of God in the heart is keeping the commandments."

God? No; none of all these, nor yet the law itself, for the change is not said to be effected by a discovery of beauty or excellence any where, but by obedience only. Nothing can tend more to destroy enmity or produce love than OBEDIENCE. If men would but avail themselves of this transcendant mean, would they only refrain from evil and obey the law; enmity to God or man would be banished the earth and be known no more. Thus might man rise from his ruins and retrieve his Paradise. Some such renovation of things as this you seem to enjoy in idea at least, when you observe, "were the passions of men laid generally under the restraints of the *moral law* there would be few competitions, little opposition of interest and pursuits; and were we as individuals not only to desist from all unfair and unreasonable expectations, doing good to all mankind as we have opportunity, treating their very vices and follies with gentleness and forbearance, compassionating their weakness and ministering to their wants, we would remove many of the causes which embitter society, and cultivate that benevolence and those social affections which the law requires; we would abstain from those *wicked works which are the occasion of enmity to God and man.*" p. 30. The doctrine advanced in the passages on which I am commenting, may not only free us from the embarrassment of an original depravity, but may be applied still more extensively to show that the gospel with all its immense benefits is nothing but a nuisance. To what purpose, I ask, is the cross of Christ and the provisions of grace, if *nothing can tend more to remove* enmity or inspire love, than obedience to the moral law? Do you tell me that the design of the gospel is to announce an expiation for past sin, and thus to establish the principles of remission? If you do, I will cite you against yourself, for soon after what I have quoted, you go on to say, that, "the gospel is a new law adapted to the state of this fallen province of God's universal government, established with heavier penalties and better promises.—The object of the gospel is not different from the object of the moral law." If then the gospel be a new law, whose object is not different from that of the moral law, where is

your expiation? where remission? Obedience to the law is still the matter, and *nothing can tend more* to extirpate enmity and impress love. It is therefore just to infer that it is in reality of no advantage. The cross with all its hopes, its many blessings is superceded! Why produce a second instrument, having no new powers, no different end, drift or aim, nothing calculated to raise other emotions in the mind than a former one? If it is to do the same work, and yet cannot *tend more*, it is useless. With respect to the moral law, you add; "Christ did not come to destroy it, but to fulfil, establish, and make it honourable. Not to release us from obedience to the moral law, but to render obedience practicable. To rescue us from the curse and wrath of God, that we might serve him in newness of life." p. 30, 31. By this, you appear to me, to say, that the design of the Saviour's coming into our world, was to rescue man from the curse, and thus make it possible for him to obey the moral law; and yet how can this be? You have told us that the gospel, which is the only establishment promising pardon, is a *new law whose object does not differ from the object of the moral law*; and consequently I see no ground of hope or expectation remaining with respect to the remission of sin. Is it the object of the moral law to demand perfect and universal holiness under the penalty of death? The gospel must do the same.—Is it the object of that law to reveal guilt—to show us our proper character and standing as it appears in the sight of a holy and just God? The gospel, whose object does not differ, can do nothing less. Is it the object of that law to bind us with its curse, and denounce the wrath of a holy God against our transgressions? The gospel too, has the same precise object, and comes to fasten upon us the wrath of an angry God. Where then is the hope of pardon? In the moral law do you say? Here, sir, is your difficulty; you must either prove that the object of a law which claims perfect obedience, reveals guilt, condemns transgressing men, and binds them already with its curse, is designed also to proclaim pardon, or it will follow that it is impossible we should hear of pardon any where; at least not in the gospel, whose

object is not different from that of the moral law. And to prove that the moral law ever promised pardon, will be no easy matter; or if you should make it out, you would introduce a novelty in jurisprudence; a law denouncing a penalty and proclaiming a benefit; binding us over to wrath and giving us absolution; cursing and blessing; damning and saving us at the same moment.—A stern difficulty, sir! You must admit that the gospel has some object essentially distinct from the moral law, or cease to hope.—There remains no more sacrifice for sins.

It is not, as I conceive, the doctrine of scripture that the gospel is a *new law*; far less, that it is the same in substance with the moral law. The scripture maintains throughout, a clear distinction between the law as a covenant of works conferring life on condition of obedience, and the gospel; which is a declaration of free grace to the guilty, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ; the benefits of which are to be received by faith, in contradiction to obedience or the DEEDS of the law. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ!" John 1. 17. see also Rom. 3. 24, 28. The doctrines and promises of mercy, may in a less rigid sense be stiled a law, in as much as they bind the conscience to receive them, and involve condemnation in case of default. It is in this sense that the gospel is called a *law of faith*, as opposed to *the law of works*, but we are not therefore to conclude that it is strictly and properly a law, such as the moral law. As well might we infer that is a law, when we see it denominated *the law of the Spirit of life*, in opposition to *the law*, i. e. power and dominion *of sin and death*, or when it is contrasted with the Mosaic law, *which made nothing perfect* under the denomination of *the perfect law of liberty*. Rom. 3. 27—8. 2. James 1. 25. Heb. 7. 28—9. 9. And thus under the old Testament the doctrines of grace were styled the law. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Ps. 1. 2—19. 7—119. 18. In all such instances

the term law, as applied to the gospel, appears to be used in a less appropriate sense, and cannot prove any thing like its being a law in the proper meaning of that word, which means a rule of duty, in the obedience of which life is secured. In this lax and general sense I would not object to the gospel being called a law, when it is considered as an expression of the designs of God towards sinners, and of the conduct which he demands of them with respect to such a dispensation.

And with respect to what you say of Christ's coming to *render obedience to the moral law practicable*, it is very obvious that he must have failed in the object of his undertaking; for according to your confession we are to believe that "no man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed."

I believe with you, that the Saviour came to honor the law, to fulfil it, and preserve its integrity unimpaired; and also, that we are still under it as a rule of obedience. Yet we are not under the moral law as a covenant of works so as to justify ourselves before God, and obtain life by our obedience to it. "We are not under the law, but under grace. If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Rom. 6. 14. Gal. 3. 21, 22.

Allow me to inquire, sir, in what sense did the Saviour render obedience to law practicable. Did he lower the claims of the law, so that it should be adapted to the condition of fallen man, thus making it possible for him to obey? No; you seem to admit that he established and sanctified its demands. Or did he procure by his meritorious death, such supplies of grace for sinners, as to enable them to perform a sincere, uniform and perfect obedience? No; you are opposed to the idea of supplies of grace by any other active influence than that of truth received into the mind by its own act. Or did he enable our fallen race to obey the moral law by revealing the

gospel; the belief of which gives us the strength required? Neither can that be the case, since the object of the gospel is not different from the object of the law, and consequently no relief can be acquired—can be expected; obedience is still impracticable. But how does the idea that Christ rendered obedience to the law practicable, agree with what you afterwards labour to prove, that "the power of obeying a law has never been attributed to any other cause than knowledge of the law." p. 85. This position received as proven, it follows very clearly, that the mediation of Christ could have had no material effect in rendering obedience to the moral law practicable, as it is knowledge of the law and nothing else that confers the power of obedience. The revelation of the law in clear and intelligible terms, in proper prescriptions and penalties, was the only requisite in such a case; and that being had, power would of course be acquired for complete obedience. Perhaps you will say, that the divine Saviour illustrated the spirit of the law by his spotless example, and its penalty by his sufferings and death, and thus by enlarging our knowledge of law, gave us the ability to obey. This however, does not relieve the difficulty with which the notion is pressed for on that supposition; the *knowledge* or which is the same thing, *ability*, thus acquired, is at best partial and supplementary, the great and material point had been secured when the law was given by Moses—the law was known and could be obeyed.

But admit your opinion to be just, sir, that the lustre thrown on the law by the life and passion of the son of God, gives moral activity and vigour to the believing sinner, enabling him to obey the law for the removal of enmity and the inspiring of love, there remain still revolting objections to its truth.

One is, that you thus give the moral law a power of performing that which has never been attributed to it in scripture; I mean the power of removing enmity, and awakening love. The law is said *to work wrath and to be unto death.* See Rom. 4. 15—7. 10. Such is the office of the law as respresented in scripture, and one that bears but little resemblance to that which you assign it in your sys-

tem. And as you violate scripture in ascribing the power of reconciliation to the law, so also, you contradict the confession, which says, "the true end of the law, preached unto the people, is that they, by the law being made to see their deserved condemnation, should flee to Christ unfeignedly, to be justified by faith in him."* Another objection opposing itself to this doctrine is, that it supposes love to be the product of obedience to the law, whereas there is in reality no obedience at all without love; or anterior to it, "love is the fulfilling of the law"—The law demands love, and unless we possess that love through faith unfeigned in Jesus Christ, we have not even begun to obey it. "Now the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Tim. 1, 5. I am happy in being able to present you with a comment on this text, which though opposed to your idea of obedience, is furnished by the Westminster divines, "The obedience of the law must flow from love; and love from a pure heart; and a pure heart from a good conscience; and a good conscience from faith unfeigned; this he (the apostle) maketh the only right channel of good works."†

Though you had assigned wicked works as the root of enmity, you do not seem disposed to rely upon the principle, but go on to enumerate other sources of enmity, as follows: "the *root* of the enmity of the heart against God is the consciousness of sin, the apprehensions of divine displeasure, and the reluctance to part with sinful pleasures or pursuits.—Nor can you conceive of any principle of opposition between God and man in any other character but that of a governor. Let any man suppose God to be such an one as himself, approving of sin, he will have no enmity or opposition of nature against him. Two can walk together if they are agreed. If God never had established a government among men which laid restraints on their passions, appetites &c. there never would have been any enmity in the carnal mind against him. If they had never known that he had es-

* Page 474, practical use of saving knowledge—† Ibid.

tablished such a government, the effect would have been the same. They never would have had enmity. Their wicked works could have never awakened any apprehensions of his vengeance in their minds, nor could his laws have laid any restraints on their passions, and therefore no enmity could have been formed in the human heart against God. But the knowledge of God as a holy governor is known only by the revelation of Jesus Christ believed. The partial faith of the revelation of Jesus Christ is therefore the foundation of the enmity of the carnal mind against God, and the effect produced is perfectly conformable to the proposition believed. It begets enmity. It affects the heart. It alienates the mind from God." p. 48, 49. The first idea expressed in this citation is, *that the root of enmity is consciousness of sin, apprehensions of wrath, reluctance to part with sinful pleasures:* and that position allowed, it is inferable that the absence of those principles will be the want or removal of enmity. If the root or parent stock be removed, there can be no germ, no growth of the plant. Remove consciousness of guilt, dread of wrath, and reluctance to yield to sinful pursuits which form the root of enmity to God, and there can remain no more enmity against him. It will then follow, I think, that the highest degree of wickedness to which human nature can arrive, or imagination paint, might be free from the slightest mixture of enmity to God. Suppose a wretch that has covered himself with crimes of deepest die to be "past feeling, having his conscience seared as with a hot iron," to be callous to every sentiment of virtue or fear of wrath, to be so enfeebled by vicious indulgence as to have lost a relish for life, and prompted by a false philosophy persuading him of the propriety of suicide, coolly and deliberately to do violence to his own life; he would be just the person who has no enmity to God. Or if any person (and thousands have done it in every age) can deceive himself with a name to live while he is yet dead, and part with sinful pleasures, he will be entirely free from enmity to God. All thorough-going fanatics who are given up to strong delusions to believe a lie that they might be damned, would be divested of every *trace* of enmity.

They would in such a case have no consciousness of sin, no apprehensions of divine displeasure, no reluctance to part from sinful pleasures, whereas they conceive they are free from sin, count the world but *trash*, and are ready to go to the stake for what they falsely deem religion. Even the martyrs of atheism, sir, Vaninus, Jordanus Bruno, Cosimir Lizinski, and Mahomet Effendi were, according to your views of enmity, entirely without it. They believed no God, they acknowledged no law, they trembled at no vengeance, and sacrified every pursuit of pleasure and even life itself without a murmur. In them enmity had lost its *root!* Neither could Saul of Tarsus have had enmity to God when he breathed out threatnings and slaughter against the church of Christ and wreaked a bloody vengeance on the detested Nazareens, sparing neither sex nor age; for in all this he acted as he thought from the impulse of zeal for the glory of God and the interest of religion; he did it ignorantly in unbelief, and according to Christ's prediction respecting him and other sanguinary bigots of that day, he thought he was doing God's service in killing the disciples of Jesus; consequently had no consciousness of sin or fears of wrath. And as to sinful pleasures and pursuits, they could not be charged to him, who was *after the straitest sect a pharisee, and touching the righteousness of the law, blameless.* John 16. 2. I. Tim. 1. 13.

You tell us further, that *if God never had established a government among men restraining their passions, there never would have been any enmity in the carnal mind against him;* or *if its establishment never had been known, they never would have had enmity.* It does not appear to me absolutely certain whether you believe that the law, or the knowledge of the law is the exciting cause of enmity in the carnal mind; yet I am induced to think it is the last, from your saying that the knowledge of God as a holy governor is acquired only by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and that the *partial faith of that revelation begets enmity, affects the heart, and alienates the mind from God.* That the law should reveal the latent corruption and enmity of the heart, should discover that we are carnal and sold

under sin (which is in fact showing us that we are enemies to God, for the carnal mind is enmity) is what I can very readily admit; but that the law, or knowledge of the law should beget enmity, affect the heart, and alienate the mind from God, is to me a shocking thought. Does our estrangement from God, our opposition of nature to him commence in the knowledge of law, or in a belief of a revelation made by Jesus Christ? Is our enmity, our alienation, law-begotten? Then is the law the instrument of corruption and Jesus the author and minister of sin! It makes men enemies and sinners when they would not have been so without it. Horrid instrumentality indeed! But in truth none such belongs to the law. It is the revealer of enmity, not its foundation or cause? "By the law is the knowledge of sin." It does not create what *is not*, but only gives the discovery of what *is*. The scripture idea of enmity, is the opposition of our nature to God and all that is good which really and properly exists, previous to any revelation or discovery of it by the law. "The carnal mind is *enmity*" in the abstract "against God"—It is a native engrained opposition to God, which does actually exist in the creature whether he know it or not—It is the peculiar use of law to reveal that opposition, and thus to prove practically to us our need of the blessed offices of him who came to seek and to save that which is lost—"I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died—For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law." Rom, 7. 9—5. 13.

Faith of the revelation of Jesus begets enmity, affects the heart, and alienates the mind from God! How unlike this, my dear sir, to St. Paul's account of the matter! "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." It is the *ignorance*, the *blindness of the heart*, *an evil heart of unbelief* that alienates the mind from God, and not the belief of Christ's revelation.

Allow me also to remark, sir, that it is not true in fact, that men are necessarily enemies to law, and to the executors of law, when conscious of demerit and liability to suffer. We have all seen men die by the hand of justice, who, though deeply penetrated with a consciousness of sin, nevertheless approved the law, the sentence under which they suffered, and the judge who pronounced it. How strong an instance of this kind is that mentioned by Fordyce in his dialogues on education. A servant murders his master, takes his money and jewels, and effectually conceals this crime. He is successful in business, becomes rich and respectable, and is invested with the office of judge. But, thirty years after the perpetration of the murder, at the close of a criminal proces against a felon that was fully convicted, when every body present expected him to pronounce sentence of death on the unhappy prisoner at the bar, he was pierced with a sense of his own crime, placed himself by the criminal as more guilty than he, confessed his guilt, demanded the sentence of death from the other judges, and was executed, abhoring his guilt and approbating the law.

There are also examples of this kind in scripture which are directly applicable to the question before us. The royal penitent while he is tremblingly conscious of his crimes, approves the righteous judge and the law that condemns him. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and clear when thou judgest." Thus it was with Paul too, when the commandment came home to his bosom, when his sin revived and he died, he pronounced the commandment holy, just and good, and consented to the law. These are cases, in which the consciousness of sin was not accompanied with enmity either to God or his law. But indeed, every broken hearted penitent is an example of the same thing, and might lesson us into better views of these subjects.

But you once more inform us by what instrumentality this enmity is to be removed. "If the belief of God's displeasure on the account of sin is the occasion of enmity, the belief of forgiveness and eternal life will beget

reconciliation. If the restraints upon our passions beget opposition, the prospect of eternal happiness as the fruit of obedience will occasion love and expectation." p. 50.

In page 29 you tell us, that nothing could tend more to remove opposition of heart and inspire love than obedience to the laws; here you tell us that it is the belief of forgiveness and eternal life that begets reconciliation; or which is the same thing, removes enmity and excites love. Are *these* two accounts of the matter perfectly accordant? Is *obedience to the laws* and the *belief of forgiveness and eternal life* one and the same thing. If you deny that they mean the same, then these passages are contradictory and irreconcilable with each other; *the one* asserting the removal of enmity and the acquiring of love to be effected by obedience to law; *the other*, that the very same effect is to be produced by the belief of forgiveness and eternal life—the one says it is by the *works of the law*, the other by *faith*. Or if you affirm their meaning to be the same, then it follows with infallible certainty that we are saved by works, not by grace, for *faith* being the same *with obedience to law*, and the result being the pardon of sin and the hope of eternal life as a production of reconciliation and love in the soul, which is the fulfilling of the law or personal righteousness—it is undeniably clear that righteousness cometh by the law, and salvation is of works. And that I do not mistake your meaning is certain, from your calling "the prospect of eternal happiness the *fruit of obedience*," and speaking of it as that which *will occasion love*. Thus it is that you "frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2. 21.

You make no small effort to establish the principle, that the enmity of the carnal mind forms no obstruction to believing, or at least that the obstruction is not insurmountable, but fully within the power of the understanding, and venture to declare the success you have had in these words: "I have proved *from the enmity of the carnal mind against God*, that it is *capable of receiving and believing gospel truth*." p. 53. I confess to you, sir, I have not seen where it has been proved, and for the honor of

St. Paul and the truth of revelation, I hope you have failed in making the proof. To illustrate my meaning, I will observe, that you have laid it down as a principle in your system of theology, that the *gospel is a new law not different in its object from the moral law, and that the first requisition of that law is faith.* This being the case, should you have proved *from the enmity of the carnal mind against God that it is capable* of receiving and believing the gospel, that is, of subjecting itself to the *new law of God*, and obeying its first fundamental requisition, faith, you have been terribly successful againt St. Paul; for he has solemnly asserted the very opposite, that the carnal mind which is enmity against God "is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be." So that the veracity of the apostle, or rather truth of God, is pitched against the security of your argument. But allowing it proved, what will be the natural and regular deduction? What but this? that an argument being taken from the *enmity* of the carnal mind to its *capacity* for believing, it becomes certain that the greater the enmity, the more inveterate and diabolical the opposition of the carnal mind against God, the more enlarged will be its capacity for receiving and crediting evangelical truth!—On this principle we might invert that saying of Paul, "love believeth all things;" thus, "enmity believeth all things!" Once more permit me to call up that remarkable position of yours, that the gospel is a new law adapted to the state of this fallen province of God's universal government, and in doing so to remark, that it must be wonderfully accommodated indeed to the state of his revolted subjects, when the enmity among them, the rankling opposition of their hearts secures facilities for believing.

I have never doubted that the unrenewed mind has natural capacity to believe; nor yet, that it is capable of believing every doctrine of religion in a speculative way, but that it can while carnal and under the influence of enmity exercise that faith, without which "it is impossible to please God," is what never ought to be admitted while the following passages occur in the Bible; "For I know that in me, (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;—

"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." If these and many other such passages to be met with in scripture, give us a faithful draught of human nature, it will no longer remain a problem, whether the carnal mind can do that which will please God.

Nothing is better established by fact than the proposition that men are very much influenced in their belief of any testimony or truth by their prevailing passions and prejudices. Every day's experience attests that envy, ill-will and enmity go to suspend belief; and love, affection, and the like to solicit it. Mr. Locke takes a strong view of this case where he says, "let ever so much probability hang on one side of a covetous man's reasoning, and money on the other, it is easy to foresee which will out weigh. *Earthly minds like mud walls resist the strongest batteries*; and though perhaps, sometimes the force of a clear argument may make some impression, yet they nevertheless, *stand firm and keep out the enemy truth, that would captivate and disturb them.* Tell a man passionately in love that he is jilted, bring a score of witnesses of the falsehood of his mistress, 'tis ten to one but three kind words of hers, shall invalidate all their testimonies. *Quod volumus, facile credimus.* What suits our wishes is forwardly believed, is I suppose, what every man hath more than once experimented; and though men cannot always openly gainsay or resist the force of manifest probabilities that make against them, yet yield they not to the argument."* If there be enmity in the human heart to God and truth, and you have said there is, it is morally certain it will cross and obstruct believing the gospel, and this, with the whole system of corrupt passions in man taken into the account, shows how difficult, nay, impossible it is for sinners to believe the gospel if unassisted by grace.

* Locke's Essay on the understanding, Vol. 2. P. 333.

If you failed as to proof respecting the capacity of the carnal mind, its enmity notwithstanding to believe, there is one point you have made abundantly plain, that is, that christians are in a state of enmity to God to the last moment of life. In the progress of this review, we have seen you state very seriously and reason from the principle; that "the root of the enmity of the heart against God is the consciousness of sin."—Now, my dear sir, let me present for your comparison, what you have said, page 28: "The consciousness of sin is the occasion of habitual application to God for forgiveness, and acceptance in Jesus Christ, in the whole course of the christian life." The consciousness of sin is the root of enmity in the heart; but that consciousness of sin which is the root of enmity, is the occasion of habitual application to God for forgiveness through the whole course of the christian life; therefore, christians are in a state of enmity against God as long as they continue in life. And if we add the other roots of enmity assigned by you in conjunction with consciousness of sin, I mean, "apprehensions of divine displeasure, and reluctance to part with sinful pursuits," as principal features in the picture, we will be able to make out but a melancholy draught of practical christianity—such an one as I sincerely hope will never find its resemblance, either in yourself, or in any who are mistaken enough to receive your doctrines as true. The best wish I can express for you or for them—a wish, too, in which my heart takes a warm interest, is that you and they may have through the whole journey of life, that divine and comfortable christianity, which will inspire your hearts with the "assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end."

I am, sir, your

Sincere friend and servant.

LETTER II.

THE COTTAGE, April 4, 1810.

Dear Sir,

IT is not without sensible concern, that I have seen published to the world, the sentiments you have avowed on that all important doctrine, *regeneration*. That concern does not arise from apprehensions as to any very extensive effect those sentiments may have on the public opinion; no, far from it—a few only can receive them. But it really affects me, and affects me even to sorrow, that any one should adopt, or that you should have written any thing so adverse to truth, so disastrous to faith. That indelible impressions of a wrong kind, and that too on a subject that forms the very basis of practical godliness, should be made on a single mind—that any person who has been wavering between truth and error should be led to declare himself unalterably for the latter, is a dreadful thought; and that you should be the instrument of producing such an event, is no less afflicting—a man whom age had made venerable, whose talents secured respect, and on whom the church had placed some of her fondest hopes!

These reflections, however, may be thought premature, till some examination has been made, as to the nature and tendency of those ideas which you have delivered concerning regeneration. To that examination, I mean now to address myself, and I do it with the more pleasure, and even expectation, when encouraged to rely upon your candor, by the declaration you have made as to an open and ingenuous renunciation of error, the moment it is discovered. "And if it ever appears to me that I am in an error, I shall retract every thing I have said without a blush." You have left open, sir, a most honorable way of retreat, and one which I cannot help indulging a hope, the admiring world will yet see you treading in the

majesty of conscious integrity and virtue. Oh! how glorious are the footsteps of virtue, even when she retraces her deviations from the path of wisdom. Next to the glory of having never gone astray, is that of a prompt unblushing return. I do confess I look upon this sterling assurance as a fortunate presage of that renunciation of past errors on your part, which will at no very distant period, gladden the hearts of all the friends of truth.

On the subject of regeneration, you commence with observing, "that the new birth required, is an intellectual and moral birth; it is neither physical nor carnal"—and in the conclusion of your discourse, when you come to sum up the doctrines you have delivered, you say, "I have now endeavoured to shew you that the new birth, is a spiritual or moral birth"—and again, "that the new birth consists in the faith of the gospel." p. 53. The amount of your ideas then is, that the new birth is something moral, in opposition to physical and carnal, and that it consists in, or is precisely the same with the faith of the gospel. This is a perfectly clear idea, and to understand the new birth, nothing more is wanting than to find out from yourself what the faith of the gospel is. In page 26 you have said of faith, "believing is an intellectual, not a moral act." Faith is not a moral act; it has nothing spiritually good or holy in it, and therefore must be a physical and even carnal act; for it is as we have already seen you declare, that which may take place in the carnal mind while in a state of enmity against God. In this faith which is not moral, but physical and carnal, we are to recognize the new birth, it being the very same with faith or consisting in it; and consequently the new birth turns out to be not what you say, a *moral and spiritual birth*, but a *physical and carnal one*.

Of regeneration you again say, "it is a strong and lasting impression made upon our rational faculties by the almighty force of divine faithfulness and truth." p. 1, 2. You have no where that I recollect, defined what you intend by *rational faculties;* but giving the phrase its utmost latitude, it can comprehend no more than the powers we possess of perceiving, recollecting, comparing and judging.

Admitting this to be what you mean by rational powers, It would I think be very unphilosophical to speak of impressions made upon any one of them. Impressions made upon the understanding or perceptive powers, impressions upon the memory, impressions upon the judgment or reason, would be a very strange way of speaking, to say no more of it. It is through the medium of perception that ideas are received into the mind, memory is the recollection of ideas, reason is the comparison of ideas, and judgment, the decision had with reference to that comparison of ideas. The amount of all this would be that the mind is impressed with what it perceives, and in consequence of impressions thus made, it recalls, compares, arranges, combines, judges and decides.

It is an old and justly exploded error in the philosophy of mind, to speak of understanding, memory, will, judgment and the like, as distinct isolated faculties, having separate offices, and possessing different grades of authority and power. This theory of mind you appear to me to retain, and in conformity to it, have given supreme authority to the understanding. As it respects religion, the understanding is to be and to do every thing. It is the great seat of moral power, it reflects, believes, is conscious, loves, approves, admires, &c. Now I think, sir, had your devotion to the dictates of common sense been as hearty and unreserved as you have taught us to believe, it would have long ere this corrected your views on these subjects, and led you to a more happy and natural scheme of mental philosophy. That the mind should understand, believe, be impressed, love, fear, hate, will, and be conscious of all its operations, is an idea perfectly intelligible, and one that is altogether accordant with what we experience every day. But the understanding considered as a superior principle in the soul, which is to be exclusively operated upon by divine truth, receiving impressions, putting forth acts such as believing, choosing, loving, being conscious and even originating many of its own actions or motions is really what I am able neither to apprehend nor believe.*

* This representation of the author's theory of mind, is I think just. If however I am mistaken, he himself has misled me.

Should I even allow your philosophy to be sound, how am I to reconcile your divinity with it. In the passage

Speaking of the good man's stedfast determination to keep the law, page 44, he observes, "this choice or resolution, built upon these promises, is his moral or religious principle. Every other rational choice is formed in the same manner, and every species of principle may be traced to similar operations of the mind:" and again, "all religious and moral principles belong to the understanding." Now it is plain, if *choice* and *all religious principles belong to the understanding*, I have stated his system fairly. But this is not all. After attempting (pages 80, 81) to show that the affections, such as attachment, respect, and esteem, follow in the train of the understanding, he subjoins "the love of God is in like manner purely intellectual." From this remark also taken in its connection, it would seem to be his opinion, that the affections throughout are intellectual, that is, *belong to the understanding*. Consciousness too, is either the understanding itself or one of its acts, in his scheme of philosophy. Thus, p. 79, he remarks, "to me it seems their *consciences*, that is, their *understandings*, are continually checking them."—I have not done violence to his system then in saying, that faith, choice, love, and consciousness, nay, *every species of principle belongs to the understanding*.

He sometimes uses language like this, "the will chooses," p. 81. "She [the will] chooses the greatest good, but wills feebly," p. 78: but such expressions are hostile to the other parts of his system just mentioned, where the choice is made a principle of the understanding, and what is worst of all, they have really no meaning whatever. To say the will *chooses*, the will *wills*, is the same thing as to say, the understanding *understands*, the judgment *judges*, and the like.

It also appears to be a part of his philosophy, that the understanding has supreme power and authority; for says he, "the understanding is the seat of moral power," and he frequently speaks of the understanding's *dictating to the will*. It is a problem in metaphysics, which demands the author's, not my solution, how it is that the understanding dictates to the will, when she herself is the power that originates choice or chooses; or in other words, how does the understanding issue her mandates to the will, when choice belongs to herself? Be the solution what it may, it is very unphilosophical I should think, to elevate any one faculty above the rest, whether it be the will, understanding, or any other. "For the power of thinking," says Mr. Locke, "operates not on the power of choosing, nor the power of choosing on the power of thinking; no more than the power of dancing operates on the power of singing, or the power of singing on the power of dancing, as any one who reflects on it, will easily perceive:

before us you represent religion to consist in a *strong and lasting impression* made upon the rational powers; in others you make it consist in certain intellectual actions or motions, such as believing, willing, approving, admiring, and the like, and the most awkward circumstance of this kind is, that while you here define the new birth to be an impression, you afterwards tell us it consists in faith, which faith you had declared to be an *intellectual act.* In one page it is an impression, in an other it is an act—*Here* the understanding is passive, *there* she exerts herself, and yet the effect is precisely the same in both cases!

But allow it in defiance of yourself, and in despite of propriety, to be an impression, will it amount to a sound scriptural representation of the new birth, to say it is a strong and lasting impression made by divine truth upon certain powers called rational, or even on the mind? Surely no. Balaam had strong and lasting impressions made upon his mind by direct revelation, as well as previous information. He "heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, and saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance but having his eyes open"—Yet this man was flagrantly wicked, persisting in despite of all his impressions and a full conviction to the contrary, in an attempt to curse Israel. On his case, Bp.

and yet this is it, which we say; when we thus speak, that *the will operates on the understanding, or the understanding on the will.* It is not one power that operates on another: but it is the mind that operates and exerts these powers; it is the man that does the action, it is the agent that has power, or is able to do." Essay on Understanding—Vol. 1. p. 198.

There is another circumstance that embarrasses the author's theory pretty much. It is this, while he represents the *understanding as being enabled by motives to dictate to the will,* and the *belief of the gospel as imposing a necessary choice on the heart,* he afterwards asserts the self determining, or self-exerting power of the understanding and will. See p. 2, 92, 93—motives give power to the understanding, the understanding commands the will, and yet both have a self-exerting power—motives impel, but "the intellectual motion or action begins in itself." If motives have effect on the understanding, and if that dictates to the will, what becomes of self-motion?—the author will say.

Butler well remarks: "the object before us is the most astonishing in the world! a very wicked man under a deep sense of God and religion, persisting still in his wickedness and preferring the wages of unrighteousness, even when he had before him a lively view of death and the approaching period of his days, which should deprive him of all the advantages for which he was prostituting himself."* Judas too, who lived under Christ's ministry, had great knowledge, preached the gospel and worked miracles, went out of life under strong impressions made by truth, and yet he was not born again, but "went to his place." And who will say that Devils and damned Ghosts have not strong and lasting impressions made by truth upon their minds? Let who will assert they have not, you have admitted they have.

Speaking of the immense energy of the word of God, in producing faith, you say, "If you cannot believe God's word, you can believe nothing. It is equally forcible on the minds of angels and devils. Faith is therefore the radical grace." p. 26. Your definition of the new birth, would if true, prove the regeneration of those fallen legions, who inhabit the burning regions of Tophet. If the new birth be a strong and lasting impression made by the word of God, they are tremblingly and eternally impressed. Or, if the new birth consist in *faith* of the word of God, they can have this too—*For it acts alike forcibly on the minds of angels and devils. Faith is therefore the radical grace*—Hell is therefore regenerate. Its trembling inhabitants can have that faith which is the radical grace—they possess faith, and faith is regeneration. They have strong and everlasting impressions made by the almighty force of divine faithfulness and truth, and consequently are the subjects of regeneration.

You proceed to say as to the new birth, that "it is an unshaken purpose and pursuit formed in the mind by a full view of the government of God as it is administered and explained by Jesus Christ." p. 2. Then is regeneration absolutely impossible, none can obtain it; for who

* Butler's Sermons—vol. 1. p. 181.

on this earth ever had or can have a full view of God's government, as administered by the Redeemer? Angels themselves are lost in the contemplation of that amazing government. With all their extent of intelligence, they cannot reach its extreme boundary, nor yet penetrate the mysteries of its nearest and most accessible parts. How then shall man that is made lower than the angels hold it in full survey? But were it possible to get a full view of the divine government, still it would not be true that an unshaken purpose or pursuit formed in the mind on that view would be the new birth, for such a purpose; such a pursuit might be a bad one. Julian and every other apostate from christianity, have had views of the government of God as administered by Christ, and unshaken purposes with reference to it, and yet these purposes were directed only to pursue that government with embittered malice, and if possible to overthrow it. Thus it appears that if the first part of your description of the new birth makes hell regenerate, the succeeding part would drive regeneration from the earth, and consign our world to destruction. Such are some of the results that will arise from an investigation of what you have suggested in the introductory outline which you sketch of regeneration.

I will beg your attention, sir, while I consider what you offer farther upon it, in a more detailed way.

After stating, as we have already seen, the design of our Lord's coming, as being *not to release us from obedience to the moral law, but to render obedience practicable, to rescue us from the curse and wrath of God that we might serve him in newness of life, there being mercy with him that he may be feared*—you add immediately, "now the knowledge and faith of this truth is what constitutes the first member of the new nature, acquired by the new birth. This is what divorces the heart from sin." p. 31.

The idea here is not perfectly clear and unembarrassed; but I am enabled to ascertain it by comparing the passage with what you have said, page 19&22; particularly the last in which I find this remark: "receive it therefore, I pray you, as a mortifying and painful but salutary truth, that

you are in sin, and you begin to lay up the good seed in your hearts. Your creation anew in Christ Jesus is commenced."

The reception of truth that we are sinners, or to allow the most, the knowledge and belief of that truth constitutes the first member of the new creature. Yet I cannot see how this knowledge of faith can form a single member of the new nature; for many have the fullest conviction of sin, who are entirely destitute of the new nature, even in the least degree, much less have their souls been divorced from sin. No conviction of sin, however strong, will divorce the heart from iniquity, or produce, even partially, that renovation in the divine image which is denoted by the new birth. Felix trembled and Judas agonized even to strangling and death under conviction of sin, but neither the one nor the other had any part in regeneration.

The delineation of the second member is more distinct and intelligible than the first. It is this—"he offers, therefore, his promise of forgiveness through Jesus Christ to your faith as the second article of the covenant of grace: but he offers it to you as an article of the covenant only as you derive from its author, by the faith of the promise, unfeigned repentance and an established purpose of new obedience. Now if you can believe in Christ Jesus so as to confide in him, commit your soul to him in well-doing, relying upon him for the accomplishment of the promise, and committing yourselves to the direction of his laws, the second article of the covenant is settled—another member of the new creature is formed, and you are ripening for the birth." p. 35.

In a recapitulating draught of the subject-matter of this discourse, you tell us *you have endeavoured to shew*, "that the new birth consists in the faith of the gospel." The endeavor has been very unsuccessful indeed, as the reverse has been emphatically proven. According to the passages before us, a person may have faith in the law and the gospel which it seems do not essentially differ; may have his heart divorced from sin and the cup of iniquity embittered and poisoned to his soul; may derive from Christ by faith of the promise unfeigned repentance and an established purpose of new obedience; may believingly confide

in Jesus Christ; may commit his soul to him in well doing; may rely upon him for the accomplishment of the promise, and resign himself to the direction of his laws, and still possess but two members of the new creature. He is not regenerate—He is only ripening for the birth! It might happen then, if this analysis of regeneration be adopted, that a person who really believes in Jesus Christ might have no religion, and dying in that state, be damned, "for except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is not enough that he have a member or two formed, or that he be ripening for the birth: no, surely no! every member, every part, every lineament must have evolved, or the birth will be monstrous, and cannot answer the purposes of life.

You have shewn us delineations of two members of the new creature, but where, sir, are the rest? what are they? Are we to resolve them into impressions, purposes and pursuits? or, are we to say lumpingly they are faith? You have not told us. You have mentioned a third and a fourth article of the covenant, but you have not informed us whether the belief of these articles constitutes the residuary members, and forms a complete birth.

"The third article of the covenant," you go on to say, "offered to your faith and reflection to-day by the great God, is essentially connected with the second. It is that he will lead you by his counsel, keep what you commit to him, and bring you safely to glory. This article of the covenant supposes that you submit yourselves to the government of his law and the disposal of his providence, in full confidence that his law is holy, just and true, and that his administration is conducted with wisdom, goodness, mercy and faithfulness." p. 37, 38.

I am not able to conceive a distinction between the requisition of this article, which is *submitting to the government and law of God*, and *the disposal of his providence in full confidence his law is holy, just, and true*, and *that his administration is conducted with wisdom, goodness, mercy, and faithfullness*, and that of the second which we have seen is *confiding in him, committing our souls to him in well doing, relying upon him for the accom-*

plishment of the promise, and committing ourselves to the direction of his laws. There certainly is none. So that if this belief of the second article advanced the birth to a certain degree only, the belief of the third cannot carry it any farther. Nor do you say it does. It would even seem that you have abandoned the process of the birth, and hurried into premature action the half generated embryo, the intellectual monster; for you instantly subjoin, "this is usually matter of faith in the initiatory stage of the christian life." It is doubtless just to say that submitting to God's law and the disposal of his providence is matter of faith, or the act of the new formed life in its earliest stage. In that you have said truly. But what becomes of the progressive generation of the new creature and the entire evolution of its parts which the mind had been eagerly pursuing through the course of the description? We hear no more about it. After a member or two have evolved, the process of the birth is suddenly disrupted, and the account of it absolutely abandoned. All at once we behold the christian life in exercise, putting forth its new-born powers in submission to the law and providence of God—a suitable conduct I should apprehend for any future stage, as well as in the initiatory one of the godly man's journey.

"The fourth, and last article of this covenant offered to your faith and acceptance is," we hear you say, "the resurrection from the dead, and eternal life.—By the faith and cordial acceptance of this concluding article of the covenant, you will find rest from the stings of your conscience, the wounds of your spirit, from the yoke of iniquity and the government of your passions and appetites." p. 42. How strange are these ideas! It is not the cross of Jesus who put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. —It is not expiation traced in characters of blood divine, but that faith of a happy immortality that gives rest to the bleeding conscience, breaks the yoke of iniquity, and restrains the domination of the passions. Alas! my dear sir, how you dishonour the cross, and set at nought the grand expiatory of the world. I have all along feared your professions as to the cross might be suspici-

ous, but now more than ever. Hollow indeed they must be if a stung conscience can find its balm any where else—if freedom from sin and lust can be attained in any other way. And here you positively assert, all this and much more can be obtained by faith in a resurrection from the dead and future felicity.

In vain are all the eloquent things you have said about the sufferings and death of Christ, if they do not constitute the very principle upon which sin is pardoned—if they do not form our real and proper ransom in law—if they were not a quid proquo, the very substitution which justice accepts instead of the sinner's death—a real vicarious sacrifice for sin, on the account of which, the sinner is released from the penalty of the law, and obtains remission! And you have no where, that I recollect, said that they are.—But you represent the sufferings of the Savior as conspiring with the pains and sorrows of all animated nature, to establish the authority of the law, and give a demonstration of wrath so awful as to guard the law from violation, & an expression of love so tender as to invite hopes. You say in one word, "the very design of his suffering was to guard us against sin and encourage our obedience," p. 35. but you mention none other. All this agrees very well with what is said about the gospels' being a new law, not different in object from the moral law, about obedience being rendered practicable, of calling all that the sinner does in returning to God, whether in believing or any thing else, *obedience*, and especially of the stings of conscience being quieted, and the yoke of sin dissolved by faith in the promised rest.

Under these impressions and views, my dear sir, I am induced to think your professions of respect for the cross suspicious, even though you have said that "faith draws her divine influence and consolation from heaven through the cross." Pardon me if I am too apprehensive, too jealous! The times in which I live have made me so. I have been so often deceived with names without things, with shadows without substances, with the introduction of error under the sainted shew of truth, that I have become

perhaps too inquisitive, too prying, too mercureal, anticipating the approach of heresy, as well from the badness of certain principles, as from an open unreserved avowal. And if through excess of caution I have conceived injuriously of your opinion on this subject, or unjustly suspected you of error, it will give me pleasure to be informed of, and acknowledge my mistake." But in truth, sir, have I no cause to suspect your views of the atonement, when you tell me the cordial faith of the promised inheritance, can give rest from the stings of conscience, the wounds of the spirit and the yoke of iniquity, the government of passions and appetites, the vanity of human things and moral imbecility.—It is not then a crucified Jesus that justifies the sinner, absolves his guilt, soothes his agonizing conscience, and breaks the dominion of sin, but faith in the promise of eternal life! O how unlike the doctrines of the gospel, which uniformly and variously conspire to establish the principle, that peace of conscience, rest from the anguish of a wounded spirit, freedom from the power of sin, and ability to perform duty, flow directly from a crucified redeemer; and that a happy immortality is the consequence, the joyful result of an interest in the cross. "Being justified by faith, *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* By whom also we have access by faith *into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*—And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself—These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. For he is our peace—For this is my blood of the new testament shed for many for the remission of sins—In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins—God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world—Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." It is the blood of sprinkling that soothes to peace the bursting heart, and emancipates the soul

from sin. Then, and not before, the prospect of future glory opens to the soul. The promise of future happiness cordially accepted, is as you think, the cause of peace of conscience, rest from sin, and the dominion of appetite, or in one word, regeneration: the apostle says, "God the Father hath begotten us again unto," not *by*, "a lively hope; to," not *by*, "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away"—It is utterly impossible that any person can on just or safe grounds hope for the promised rest, much more, to believe assuredly that a glorious immortality shall be his, until he has by faith in a crucified redeemer obtained victory over sin. Never can he triumph over the ills of life, the horrors of death, or the darkness that rests on the grave—never can he lift an exulting eye to the bright rewards of virtue, till he has seen his guilt blotted out in the blood of Jesus, and felt the dominion of sin destroyed in his soul by the power of God. Then it is that he hopes, expects, nay, exultingly seizes the lofty, animating prospect of eternal glory, and bursts out into the triumph of St. Paul, "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus, sir, I have reviewed the delineation you have given us of the new birth—a delineation, which though not graphically exact, is nevertheless sufficiently so to make me suspect its legitimacy, and exclaim, How unlike truth! How inferior to one that ravishes the eye and warms the heart of many a cottager in our country! I mean that of the great Mr. Davies in his sermon on regeneration. Behold, my dear sir, with what seraphic touches he finishes his admired picture of the new creature! "In short, the mean, depraved, earth-born creature is made an infant angel; nay, St. Peter tells you, he is made partaker of the divine nature. 2. Pet. 1. 4. What a glorious and surprizing change is this! Should you see a clod rising from under your feet, and brightening into a sun, it would not be so glorious a transformation. This change gives

a man the very temper of heaven and prepares him for the enjoyments and employments of that sacred place."*

The very naming of this truly christian orator reminds me of the injury you have done him. From mere hearsay, from jaundiced report, you venture to assert, "Mr. Davies says, regeneration consists in a superadded faculty, and elsewhere in an unessential adjunct; and contends (as I am well informed, and indeed I have to write most of these particulars, either from information or memory,) that the rational life can form as little judgment of the spiritual life as a horse can of a man, or a wheatfield of a horse." p. 57, 58. Merciful heavens, what slander!—And have you defiled a page of yours with a thing so gross, so unseemly? Have you given to this idle, vagrant rumour consecration and respect by lending it your name and your pen?—Indeed, sir, I witness such conduct on your part with astonishment! and permit me to say, it is as much beneath you, as expressions so coarse, so unintelligible, are below Mr. Davies. No; he never uttered them—the place cannot be shewn where he says, "regeneration consists in a superadded faculty—an unessential adjunct." In his sermons on spiritual life, (which is probably the part of his works to which you allude,) he indeed contends that our powers are so broken and mutilated by the fall, as to be incapable of knowing and choosing that which is morally good, and that such a capacity or power must be superadded to enable us to exercise our rational powers in the way of a spiritual operation. There is no faculty, no adjunct supposed but what is purely moral and spiritual. Nor does he ever say, that, "the rational life can form as little judgment of the spiritual life, as a horse can of a man, or a wheatfield of a horse," for he there remarks the very reverse, "our rational powers can indeed still exercise themselves about divine things, but not in a fit manner." He indeed expresses himself in the following manner concerning the incapacity of unregenerate men for understanding spiritual life: "nothing but reason can inform what is a ration-

* Davies' Sermons, vol. 3. p. 123.

al life. Let the faculties of the most sagacious animal be ever so much polished it can receive no ideas of it. So he that believeth hath the witness in himself." 1 John, 5. 10; and none but himself can hear its testimony." But in a note he guards very explicitly against the abuse which it appears has been made of his remark. "I do not mean that the unregenerate have the *same degree of incapacity* in the one case, as beasts have in the other, but only that one is really as incapable as the other. Reason in the unregenerate, approaches nearer to spiritual life, than the powers of animal life do to reason, and yet comes entirely short of it."*

But Davies is not singular in his fate. "Doctor Witherspoon contends," you go on to say, "that it [regeneration] is the work of the spirit, *anticedent to*, and *separate from revelation*." p. 58.—Where, sir, does he thus contend?—Tell me; I have looked for it in vain; if it is to be found in any part of his works, tell me where! That great man whose mind and manner were luminous as the day, and who was unusually correct in the doctrines he delivered, never could, I am assured, have expressed himself so unguardedly, so erroneously as you have asserted. But the representation you have made of his opinion will be best repelled by his express declaration. "As, therefore, the change is properly of a moral or spiritual nature, it seems to me to consist in these two things, 1. That our supreme and chief end be to serve and glorify God, and that every other aim be subordinate to this. 2. That the soul rest in God as its chief happiness, and habitually prefer his favour to every other enjoyment."† See his excellent work entitled, a Practical Treatise on Regeneration—A work as rich with piety, as it is happy in the explanation of the subject it treats.

Edwards is a name which you profess to reverence, but even that is no shield from injurious treatment. "Doct. Edwards," you say, "in the history of his own conver-

* See Davies' Sermons, vol. 3. p. 133, 135.

† Works, vol. 1. p. 145.

sion, represents it [regeneration] as a new taste for the glory of God, by which the sinner is reconciled to the sovereignty of God, whether God should save or destroy him." p. 57. comp. p. 69.

Here you are more specific, but equally incorrect. In the history of Dr. Edwards's conversion, written by himself, I cannot find where he represents regeneration as a *new taste*. He observes, with respect to the sovereignty of God in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased, which from infancy had always, he says, appeared to him a horrible doctrine; "But I remember the time very well when I seemed to be convinced and fully satisfied as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure." He afterwards says, "I have often, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often since had not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has often appeared exceeding pleasant, bright and sweet." After an instance of this kind he subjoins, "From about that time I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward sweet sense of these things at times came into my heart, and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them."* These, sir, are the words of Edwards, and are far from justifying the representation you have made. You have said he represents regeneration as a *new taste*. The Doctor does not even name the word regeneration at all, nor yet does he call it *new taste*. He speaks of *a new kind of conviction, a new kind of apprehensions*, and *a sweet inward sense of divine things*. You make him say this new taste for the glory of God reconciles the sinner to the sovereignty of God whether it saves or damns him individually. The conviction experienced by Dr. Edwards respected the sovereignty of God *in disposing of men generally according to his sovereign pleasure*.

But to shew how unjustly you represent the views of

* Edwards's Works, vol. I. p. 33, 34.

Edwards on the subject of regeneration I will bring forward a direct explanation of it in his own words. "By regeneration, or being *begotten* or *born again*, the same change in the state of the mind is signified with that which the scripture speaks of as effected in true *repentance* and *conversion*. I put repentance and conversion together, because the scripture puts them together, Acts 3, 19. and because they plainly signify much the same thing. The word METANOIA (repentance) signifies a *change of the mind;* as the word *conversion* means a *change* or *turning* from sin to God. And this is the same change with that which is called *regeneration*, excepting that this latter term especially signifies the change as the mind is *passive* in it."*

Another object of crimination and disgust with you is Hopkins, whose divinity you are *informed* has infected the Synod pretty generally, and tinctured the prevailing opinions of our day. "Hopkins, improving on the hint, represents regeneration as consisting in the infusion of benevolence into the mind, which extends itself to God and his glory as the greatest good, and then to the several grades of holiness, in the different orders and individuals, in proportion to their several degrees of holiness; and as God is super-eminently holy, the regenerated must love him so well that he would be contented to be damned to all eternity if the glory of God required it." p. 57. comp. p. 69.

Where, allow me to ask again, does Hopkins thus represent regeneration?—I have not seen it so represented in any part of his works to which I have had access; nor do I believe you are able to shew that he has ever given such a representation. Speaking of the new birth he observes, "In this renovation there is the operation of the cause, which is the work done by the spirit of God; and there is the effect, which consists in the exercises of the regenerate, in which they are active and agents. Though these imply each other, and cannot be separated more than the cause can be separated from the effect, yet they must be distinguished, and the former may properly be called

* Edwards's Works, vol. 6. p. 410.

regeneration;"* From this quotation we see that Hopkins conceives regeneration to be the work done by the spirit of God on the soul; but the effect produced by the regenerating energy of the spirit of God is denominated by him *active conversion*, "which," he afterwards says, "consists in turning from sin to God, or in holy exercise, which is true love to God, and loving our neighbour as ourselves; which implies a sight and belief of the truth; repentance, faith in Christ, and submission and devotedness to him."†

Thus it appears that you have done injustice to Hopkins, as well as to others, on the doctrine of regeneration; and as to the idea of a willingness to be damned for the glory of God, I must say I have never seen it in his writings nor yet in the writings of any other author on the same side.‡ Before you publish to the world the dogmas of Hopkins and his followers it would be well if you would peruse his works, and those of Emmons, Strong, and others; and this done, quote them fairly that your readers may have the opportunity of examining for themselves, and feeling the force of your observations concerning them.

I am no disciple of Dr. Hopkins, yet his memory should be secure from unjust imputations. I believe him to have been a very pious and diligent man. He has written well on several subjects of theology, and deserves to be admired for the serenity and gentleness of his manner,

* Hopkins's System of Divinity, vol. 1. p. 530. † Ibid 540

‡ Hopkins expresses himself on disinterested benevolence in the renewed person thus: "And if he could know that God designed, for his own glory and the general good, to cast him into endless destruction; this would not make him cease to approve of his character; he would continue to be a friend to God and be pleased with his moral perfection." Syst. Div. Vol. 1. p. 561.

This is evidently a supposed case, and therefore cannot be an experimental willingness to be damned, of which the author speaks. I am not, however, fond of such suppositions, nor of any such refinements in theology. Sublimated theory is hurtful in any science, but especially in that which respects our future happiness.

no less than for a very fortunate and lucid display of scripture proofs. Yet he has sublimated too much, he has refined laboriously on certain subjects, and consequently has pushed his enquiries beyond the limits of sobriety and sound doctrine.

You insinuate that his system has been adopted by many members of the Synod of Kentucky, and that his opinions as to regeneration "have tinctured more or less all the prevailing opinions of the times, and has concealed, disguised or consecrated all the enthusiasm and delusions of most churches to the present day." p. 70.

His system, as represented by you, is believed no where; neither here nor any where else; and as it really is, very few of the Synod know much about it, nor do I believe that a single individual among us is a proselyte to it. But the rumour is out, and you have not scrupled to give it a more extensive publicity. Alas, how you stoop, my dear sir, to listen to the tale of calumny—to give form and substance to the fugitive breath of the accuser; and, by publishing hearsay reports and the figments of fancy, to aim a deadly shaft at the reputation of the venerable dead as well as the living. Your duty as a man and a citizen, and your obligations as a christian minister, who should feel as well as preach the sweet charities of our holy religion, demanded imperatively that instead of countenancing and publishing the floating tales of the ignorant, the mistaken or the malicious, you should have done your best to have arrested the progress of "back wounding calumny," and generously aimed to "tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue."

We have a right to remonstrate here, and to remonstrate strongly!

As to the imputation of Hopkinsian doctrines having *concealed, disguised and consecrated the enthusiasm and delusions of the day*, it is plainly impossible for the reasons already given; because no church or society believes it as you have stated it, and as it really *is* no body of people know any thing about it in this country. And in those parts of the United States where the doctrine is understood, believed, and preached, (I mean among the congregational

churches in New-England) it will be hard to point out any thing like a prevailing fanaticism. They have had for some years back a considerable revival among them, which has been conducted in the style of silent, awful solemnity and penitent tenderness, without noise, without tumult, without distraction. But, sir, I can tell you, and tell you with truth, that amidst the tumultuous scenes which have been witnessed among us I have uniformly heard the very doctrines of your pamphlet ardently and perseveringly taught: and at this moment it is among people of a disorderly, enthusiastic cast that you are reaping a harvest of applause. I declare to you a fact—a fact too that is known to thousands, and one that is attested by several polemical tracts published in our country, when I say that our unhappy brethren who some years ago produced a schism in our church (an event which as it respects themselves I shall ever deplore) went from among us believing and avowing the precise system of doctrines you have seen fit to publish to the world: and it is no less a fact that they, with their followers, do at this very time give entire approbation to your scheme, as far as it has disclosed itself. And some of them have professed (I will not say how truly—you know best) to have received their illumination on these points from yourself. Be that as it may, the fact is indisputable that they broached the same errors with yourself, started the same objections to truth, and assailed us on the same points; and though they performed their part more feebly they were not defective in zeal. Indeed, sir, if they had no connection with you, there is at least a most astonishing coincidence of sentiment and detail observable between you and themselves, though it is true, they have carried the system to a much greater length than you have yet done. Nor are they the only party that admire your work; other erratic sects are gratified with it so far as it is opposed to Calvinism, and for it you have their approbation and thanks. Yes sir, the sectaries praise you!

The opposition offered by you, sir, to such authors as Edwards, Davies, and Witherspoon was indeed to be expected; it should excite no surprise: but that you should, while censuring their opinions on regeneration,

assert your doctrines to be the exact counterpart of the doctrines of the reformation and confession of faith, is matter of surprise, and is not easy to be explained. To that effect you express yourself, p. 75: "compare these passages with the sum of saving knowledge, and the practical use of saving knowlede in the Westminster confession, and you will clearly see that the doctrines I am here advocating, both with regard to regeneration and necessity, as well as the subordinate doctrines I have treated, and shall treat in these investigations, are the doctrines of the reformation and of the confession of faith which I and others have adopted by solemn vows, however it may accord with modern refinements."

The impression to be made by these and similar observations to be met with in your book is, that the late authors impugned by you as well as the synod of Kentucky, have by false and hurtful refinements, departed from the doctrines of the confession and of the reformation, while you in obedience to solemn vows have religiously observed and defended these doctrines. I shall now endeavour to counteract the effect of your insinuations by showing what the doctrine of the Westminster confession is, concerning regeneration; and also what sentiments were entertained on that subject by some great men who certainly were no refiners in theology, and most of whom lived about the period which gave birth to that admired system of divinity.

I shall first consider the doctrine of the confession. After stating the inability of the sinner "to convert himself or prepare himself thereunto," the confession of faith proceeds to describe regeneration under the phrase of *effectual calling*, in which there is a clear distinction drawn between the word and the agency which renders it effectual. "This effectual call is of God's free and *special grace alone*; not from any thing foreseen in man, *who is altogether passive therein*, untill being *quickened and renewed by Holy Spirit*, he is *thereby* enabled to answer this call, and also to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit who worketh, when, and where,

and how he pleaseth: so also are all other persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." Chap. 10. The opinion which you, sir, have advocated is, that the new birth consists in the faith of the gospel; but this passage expressly teaches us, that sinful man, dead in himself, is enabled by the *quickening of the Holy Spirit* to embrace the grace offered; or in other words, believe the gospel: and as to infants dying in infancy, and other persons incapable of being called by the preaching of the gospel or the ministry of the word, (a class of people for which your scheme offers no provision,) it asserts that they are regenerated by the simple agency of the Holy Spirit. In the sum of saving knowledge, after the outward and ordinary means of conversion, viz: the word of God, the sacraments, Kirk government and prayer, had been stated, the power which renders them effectual, is noticed as follows: "by these outward ordinances, as our Lord makes the reprobate inexcusable, so, in the POWER OF HIS SPIRIT, he applies to the elect effectually all saving graces purchased to them in the covenant of redemption, and maketh a change in their persons. In particular, 1st he doth convert or regenerate them, by giving spiritual life to them, in opening their understandings, renewing their wills, affections and faculties, for giving spiritual obedience to his commands." The power of the Spirit by the word as an outward mean operating a change in the persons of sinners, so as to produce obedience to the commands of God, is a doctrine very dissimilar to that which speaks of the obedience of sinners to the laws as tending to remove enmity and excite love, or that of the omnipotence of the word obeyed or believed to convert or regenerate the soul by its own appropriate powers.

Dr. Manton thus expresses himself concerning regeneration: "though the *infusion of life be God's immediate work*, yet because it is done in concomitancy and association with the word, therefore the effect is ascribed to the word as well as to the spirit: so the law of God is said to *convert the soul*. Ps. 19. 7. and the gospel is said to be *the power of God to salvation*. Rom. 1. 16. that is, God doth not ordinarily work any other way; and hath tied us to de-

pend upon him in the use of these means for such an effect. As the stars shed abroad their influence by air and clouds to make the earth fruitful, and insinuate their effects by other natural causes; so doth God *convey his power* in a concomitancy *with* the word, though not *by* the word; that is, there is not *any natural force put into it* to produce such an effect."*

I next select the opinion of the venerable Charnock: "It is a real change; real from nature to grace, as well as *by grace*. The term of creation is real: the form introduced in the new creature is as real as the form introduced by creation into any being. Scripture terms manifest it so. *A divine nature*, the *image of God*, a *law put into the heart*, they are not nominal and notional; it is a reality the soul partakes of; it gives a real denomination, a new man, a new heart, a new spirit, a new creature, something of a real existence."†

This author having taken this view of the new birth as a real and proper creation, goes on at great length to argue that God is the immediate, efficient cause of that creation; and afterwards makes this, among other inferences: "*That regeneration does not depend merely upon the word, if God be the efficient cause of it. It depends upon the inward efficacy of the Spirit.*"‡

Doct Goodwin, who was one of the divines that formed the Westminster Confession, thus addresses himself to his audience in a sermon on the new birth: "My brethren, when we tell you there is such a mighty power in conversion, your thoughts run to nothing but thundering works. You think presently the power must lie in thundering men down to hell with terrors. No. It lies in changing men's hearts by an omnipotent power; but that power is but a still work; it is but a drop, and it falleth as a drop; for so conversion is compared, *my doctrine shall distil as the dew*, and there is *a thunder of power goeth with it* though it is not heard."§

* Manton's Works, vol. 6. p. 887.

† Charnock's Works, vol. 2. p. 45. ‡ Ibid 145.

§ Goodwin's Works, vol. 1. p. 368.

Dr. Howe lived in the same century with, and but a few years later than Goodwin. In his sermon on this subject he says, "The work of regeneration consists in the *impregnating and making lively and efficacious* in you of *the holy truths contained in the gospel. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruit of his creatures.* James 1. 18. And again, *being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God.* 1 Pet. 1. 23. So our Saviour prays, *sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.* John 17. 17. The gospel upon this account is called *the word of life.* Phil. 2. 16; as by which the principles of that holy life are implanted in the soul."*

Dr. Owen, who was one of the best men, and among the most learned divines that have appeared since the days of St. Paul, and, contemporary with Goodwin and the other members of the Westminster assembly, advocates the same doctrine.

Speaking of regeneration, he observes, "unless a work wrought by power, and that *real*, and *immediate*, be intended herein, such a work may neither be supposed possible, nor can be expressed. Wherefore it is plain in the scripture, that the Spirit of God works *internally*, *immediately*, *efficiently*, in and upon the minds of men in their regeneration. The new birth is the effect of an act of his *power* and *grace*; or, no man is born again but it is by the *inward efficiency of the* SPIRIT.†"

If you will, my dear sir, give yourself the trouble to peruse this author's profound work concerning the Holy Spirit, you will be so far from seeing any thing like sameness of opinion between you and himself, that you will see yourself strongly refuted in almost every doctrine advanced in your publication.

Mr. Flavel, sir, who knew nothing of *modern refinements*, has these remarks on Eph. 2. 1. *And you hath*

* Howe's works, vol. 3. p. 20.

† Owen on the Spirit, vol. 1. p. 491.

he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins—" Now this verb sunezoopoiese, *hath he quickened*, imports the first vital act of the Spirit of God, or his first enlivening work upon the soul in order to its union with Jesus Christ: for look, as the blood of Christ is the fountain of all merit, so the Spirit of Christ is the fountain of all spiritual life: and until he quicken us, i. e. infuse the principle of the divine life into our souls we can put forth no hand, or vital act of faith to lay hold upon Jesus Christ."*

Witsius gives this definition of the new birth: "Regeneration is that supernatural act of God, whereby a new and divine life is infused into the elect person, spiritually dead, and that from the incorruptible seed of the word of God, made fruitful *by the infinite power of the spirit.*"†

The celebrated Cudworth, who though a pious man, cannot be charged with being very rigid in his attachment to Calvinistic doctrine, never hesitates a moment on this subject, but admits without reserve the necessity of a divine power in regeneration. In a sermon preached from 1 Cor. 15. 57. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." He thus speaks concerning the new birth, or our first victory over sin: "The first degree whereof is *a principle of new life, infused into the soul by the spirit of Christ through faith* (which the apostle calls semen DEI the seed of God) inclining it to love God and righteousness as a thing correspondent to its nature, and enabling it to act freely and ingenuously in the ways of God out of a living law written upon the heart, and to eschew sin as contrary to a vital principle. For the true Gospel righteousness which Christ came to set up in the world doth not consist merely in outward works, whether ceremonial or moral, done by our own natural power in our unregenerate state, but in *an inward life and spirit wrought by God*, which those very philosophers seemed in a manner to acknowledge that denied that *virtue could be taught* by outward rules and precepts like an art or trade:—And Aristotle himself also, when he

* Flavel's works, vol. 1. p. 279.

† Wits. Œconomy of the Covenants, vol. 2. p. 50.

inclines to think that men are *theia moira agathoi*, and that their being good depends upon some *extraordinary divine influence and assistance*;* which I the rather take notice of

* There existed among the ancient heathen philosophers whose minds had not been poisoned with epicurean principles, and also among the people at large, a very general impression of the vast, nay, indispensible importance of a divine influence in every great undertaking, and particularly in attempting to pursue a virtuous course.

They painted the scene of virtue as a height of difficult and arduous ascent, requiring not only vigorous effort on the part of humanity, but some extraordinary assistance of the Gods to enable the sacred traveller to reach its sublime summit. True greatness in any other sense, was to be attained according to them, in no other way. To the instances adduced by Dr. Cudworth let me add one or two others. Cicero, who ranks among the most amiable and accomplished of the heathen philosophers, often touches with much feeling on this subject, and on one occasion has these memorable words, Nemo igitur vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit; "Never was there a great man without a divine impulse". De Nat. Deor. 2. 66. Plutarch advocates a similar opinion, when he says, "why should we judge it incongruous, that a like spirit of the Gods should inspire Zaleucus, Minos, Zoroaster, Lycurgus, Numa, or many others who were legislators, governors, or founders of commonwealths?. nay, what if we should suppose that the Gods make it a serious business to inspire such men with great and noble designs, and that if they ever converse with poets and musicians they do it merely to divert themselves?" Plut. Lives, vol. 1. p. 201.

The doctrine of the influence of the Spirit of God, as Dr. Buchannan informs us, was a material branch of the oriental mythology. "In the most ancient writings of the Hindoos," says this worthy man, "it is asserted that the "divine spirit or light of holy knowledge" influences the minds of men. And the man who is the subject of such influence is called the man "twice born." See his excellent sermon, entitled The Star in the East. p. 7.

Whence the prevalence of this sentiment among heathens? Is it the honest decision, the clear judgment of incorrupt reason which thus announces its own imbecility, and invokes the kind interposition of the Deity in its behalf? or rather is it the residuary impression of some original revelation made to man by the Deity himself? Account for it as we please, the fact presents itself to the mind of every candid enquirer after truth, as strong collateral evidence in favour of immediate influence. Oh, how it grieves my heart to see professed christians and christian ministers too, with the gospel in their hand, deride a doctrine as the offspring of

because some late pretenders to philosophy have profanely derided this doctrine as if it made *good thoughts* and *virtuous dispositions* to be POURED and BLOWN into men by God."

Now, my dear sir, where is the resemblance existing between your doctrine of regeneration, and that delivered by these great and good men? I see none. You have deserted the footsteps of the venerable dead. The difference between you and them is immense. Heaven and earth are not more divided! They held and contended for the very doctrines you have endeavoured to expose. What you affect to admire in the dead, you cannot bear in the living. You build the tombs of the prophets, but alas, you hate their image in those who are their legitimate successors.

It was the sentiment, you see, sir, of the Westminster and other divines of those days, that regeneration was the work of God's spirit wrought by an immediate operation on the mind through the medium of truth—The word was the means, the agent was God; and I need not remind you, how unlike it is to your divinity which allows of no other *species of power that can operate on intellectual natures, but the word only.* The difference must be visible even to yourself, and with respect to others, I trust we shall no more have it dinned in our ears that you hold the good old reformed doctrines.

That the ideas of these excellent men, and our own, are not the idle fictions of theory, but the sound judgments of truth, is very evident from this consideration, that the work of grace in regeneration is always described by words denoting a vigorous direct agency, an immediate internal operation, such as begetting, quickening, creating, circumcising without hands, and the like; and that whenever it is spoken of with respect to sinners, it is constantly expressed in the passive form; such as being begotten, quickened, created, born again, the circumcision of Christ, and similar phrases. Agency or active efficiency

weakness and enthusiasm, which anxious and embarrassed heathens who enjoyed but a few oblique rays of light, have embraced with ardour. Let us beware lest heathens rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us.

is uniformly ascribed to God in the article of the new birth, a passive posture assigned to us, and none other than an instrumental, subordinate power allowed to the word. This reflection is singly sufficient to dissolve the Pelagian hypothesis of regeneration being wrought in the heart by the sole power of truth.

Allow me for a moment, sir, to dwell upon this view of the subject a little more particularly; and 1st, of the divine agency as it is expressed by the terms begetting, or *begotten again.*

"Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Pet. 1. 3. The sense of this passage is clear and definite. It is God that begets us again; he does so of his own abundant mercy, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ forms the principle upon which that efficiency proceeds, in as much as the intercession of the Saviour, or his appearing before God for us in virtue of his infinitely precious sacrifice, is the ground of every gracious communication to sinners. And that some active internal influence is put forth by God himself in the work of regenerating the soul, is clear from this, that it is viewed by the apostle as matter of gratitude and thankfulness. "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath begotten us." Why ascribe agency to him at all? or why thank him for such exertion of power if in reality he made none? The force of this passage will perhaps be evaded by suggesting that God deserves our gratitude and thanks for giving us that holy word, which by its own appropriate energy begets again to a lively hope. But this objection is easily repelled by another passage of scripture, in which the agency of Deity and the office of truth are kept perfectly distinct from each other. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." Here God is represented as acting in the regeneration of sinners from the impulse of his own benevolent will, and yet that acting moves in its own prescribed channel—"the word of truth." And what sup-

ports this interpretation with great force is, that the passage itself is prefaced by these remarkable words, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning." James 1. 17, 18. Thus it appears that the power which regenerates, as well as every other good and perfect gift proceeds immediately from the Father of lights.

And it is on this principle that the blessed Saviour prays the Father for his disciples, and not for them only, (as he positively informs us) but for all that should ever believe through their word. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." John 17. 17, 20. Now it is plain there was a something to be done for the sanctification of all believers in Christ to the end of time by God himself, by an agency peculiarly his own, though that agency would take place through the instrumentality of truth. To pray thus was useless if God had nothing to do in their sanctification, and the truth had all. The agency of deity in our renovation, and the efficacy of truth upon the mind, are clearly distinguished 2 Thess. 2. 13: "Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." The sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit was necessary to the salvation of those converts as well as faith in the gospel.

On the other hand the new birth, as it respects us, is expressed in the passive sense, which no less strongly implies agency on the part of the deity; "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.—Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not."—John 1. 13—3. 5. 1 John 3. 9—5. 18.

These texts clearly teach us that we are acted upon by God in our regeneration, or that it is by his powerful

agency that we become new born. And lest it should be alledged that this acting upon is merely by truth, let it be remembered that the word is never spoken of in terms that express agency, but only in such as denote the instrumentality or means by which that effect is produced.—"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit"—that is by a divine agency—"being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever."—According as his *divine power* hath given unto us *all things that pertain unto life and godliness* through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby," i. e. by whose divine agency "are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." 1 Pet. 1. 22, 23. 2 Pet. 1. 3, 4. In these passages, viewed in their connection, a divine operation accompanying the word as the means of rendering it efficient is very plainly asserted. Is it not strange they ever should have been selected in proof of the opposite opinion? But that which renders this argument, I think, clearly unanswerable is that the scripture represents the new birth as taking place by an act of God's power in distinction from every other agency or method of producing such effect. "He came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*" Here the power to become the sons of God is spoken of as a gift—Here the new birth is ascribed to a divine operation in contradistinction from all other agencies, means, or operations whatever.

It is your opinion, sir, that the word must be suffered to enter into the view of the understanding, or in other words, that we must dig deep and count the cost, ponder and calculate, before it can produce faith in the heart or regenerate us. Now it is plain that on such a view of the subject our becoming regenerate depends upon digging deep, calculating, and bringing the truth into the view of the understanding. We cannot be born without these acts, nor can these acts take place but by our willing they

shall take place; therefore our being born again depends upon our own will. It is *of our own will* that we are born again. Unless *we will* first, we cannot be born again. But says the passage before us, not *of the will of the flesh*, nor *of the will of man*, but *of God*. We have a similar representation in the ninth of Romans: "So then it is not of him that *willeth*, nor *of him that runneth*, *but of God* that sheweth mercy." According to your scheme it is of him that *willeth* and of him that *runneth* that mercy is obtained. He must will, he must do, otherwise he neither gets nor can get mercy or become a new creature. All that God has done, (and the system supposes he had done all he can do) all the willing and compassions of his heart, will not regenerate a single soul without the creature's own *willing* and *running*. But let God be true and every man a liar—when he speaks let humbled sinners hear.—"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, *but of God* that sheweth mercy."

Regeneration, therefore, is a deep and radical work of divine power, entering into the first rudiments of character and life, renovating a being that is *without strength*, *dead in trespasses and sins*, changing *the carnal mind itself*, *which is enmity against God—is not subject to his law*, *neither indeed can be*; and while a change so penetrating, so primitive, is operating, no exertion on the part of such a being can be supposed that will aid deity in his work, because that being is in himself totally depraved and opposite to that and every good work. Surely men do not weigh as they should the import of the word *born again*—another "anew from the beginning, from the very first rudiments of life."* Such a change on such a creature claims a divine operation as its adequate cause.†

* So it is rendered by Kypke, Syriac version and Parkhurst. See Greek and English Lexicon on the word.

† Faithful ministers, who are considered in scripture as "workers together with God," are said to beget others in a spiritual sense; but in such a case their agency is evidently to be under-

2. The same idea is expressed by the phrase, *a circumcision made without hands.*

The act of God in circumcising the heart is promised, and the effect produced by that act upon the heart is delivered in such terms as demonstrate that it is his own agency, and none other, that has been employed. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Such is the promise: what is the fact? "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Col. 2. 11.

Made without hands.—This phrase always denotes the direct agency of God, or an operation of divine power in distinction of means or subordinate causes. We see it used, 2 Corinth. 5. 1. to express the power which forms the christian's better home—a power purely and exclusively divine. "We have a building of God, an house *not made with hands*, eternal in the heavens." Is our mansion in the skies *of God?* Is it made *without hands*, that is by an act of God's power only?—So is the circumcision of the heart. It is also made use of Heb. 9. 11. to express the power which reared the human nature of Christ, which is called a "greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands." We know that the "holy thing which was born of" Mary was produced by an immediate agency of deity, by "the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her." And as to the same thing the Son thus addresses the Father—"A body hast thou prepared me." See Matt. 1. 18, 20. Luke 1.

stood as instrumental and subordinate. Thus Paul says, 1 Corinth. 4. 15, "For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Here the supreme agency, which was efficient in the regeneration of those converts, was from the great head of the church. Paul's agency was subordinate only: IN CHRIST I have begotten; the means was the gospel; but both the agency of Paul and the means, i. e. the gospel, would have been ineffectual without the Supreme agency. "Paul plants and Apollos waters, but God giveth the increase." This shews where efficiency lies!

35. Heb. 10. 5. Now if that stupendous fabric, the human nature of Christ, was erected by an efficiency solely and entirely divine—if it was an effect not produced with hands, or by second causes, just so is the circumcision or regeneration of the heart.

3. The same idea is very clearly expressed when the new birth is called a new creature, or a new creation.

"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," or there is a new creation; "old things are passed away;—Behold all things are become new—For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," or a new creation, 2 Corinth. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. The word creation, in its true and proper sense, means the production of something out of nothing, and in that sense it describes with great justice and animation that effect which is wrought upon the soul in regeneration. Something is formed there which did not before exist, and that something is produced from nothing. It is a real and proper, though a spiritual creation—a theia phusis—"a divine nature," as St. Peter calls it. There is nothing in man—there are no materials out of which to form this new creation. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) there dwelleth no good thing—The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God—The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint, there is no soundness—not as though we were able to think any thing as of ourselves—without me ye can do nothing." There is not only a total want of every good thing in the unconverted sinner, but the presence of that which is positively bad and wicked—*a carnal mind, an evil heart of unbelief.* "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Such a production is absolutely impossible. The new nature in such hearts as carnal sinners possess must be produced by an act of creating power, and that is just what God claims as his own peculiar work. Speaking of the conversion of the Jews, (an event yet to be fulfilled, and consequently matter of prediction and promise) he says, "For behold I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former

shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." Isai. 65. 17, &c. A prediction no less remarkable, and one that relates to the same glorious event, together with the conversion of the Heathens, is found in the 102 Psalm, v. 13—22. In that blessed prophecy we note these words, "This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." If God is never to operate upon the mind in conversion—if he has nothing to do with the hearts and wills of men by any immediate agency, why has he promised to do so in these and a thousand other passages?

The prayer of the royal penitent declares that God operates in the production of the new creature. "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me." For why pray to God for such interposition of his power in a way of new creation, if he has done all and can do nothing more than he has done in giving his word? It was only to ponder and bring it near, and the effect of regeneration would irresistibly follow. To pray were the height of folly in such a view of things.

While God from his throne declares his prerogative of forming or creating the heart anew, hear the Church exclaim, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works—and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Eph. 2. 10. Col. 3. 10. They knew and felt that something had been done in them and for them which no created arm could effect—that it resulted from nothing in themselves, from no self-generation, but from the evolution of God's own almighty fiat.

It was the opinion of ancient philosophers, whether theists or atheists, that to create something out of nothing was impossible and absurd; but they differed in this—the former taught that the worlds were framed by an intelligent first cause out of the primordial atoms supposed to have existed from eternity; the latter taught that the combination and arrangement of these atoms in the universe, whether in animate or inanimate forms, was the result of

either blind chance or the percipient plastic power resident in themselves. Sceptical philosophers of our own times, refining on the system of these atheists, allege that the world arose from very small beginnings, and has become what it now is, both in form and inhabitants, from the inherent activity of certain principles originally impressed by the hand of the deity, and not from any operation of divine power. What these gentlemen do as to physics too many divines have done as to certain subjects of theology. They will allow the great God the honour of the first arrangement; he appoints means and impresses them with certain peculiar powers; and these by their own appropriate energies operate all the changes occurring in the spiritual world. The activity of mind and the almighty power of truth does every thing.

Thus it is, my dear sir, that you and others rob God of omnipotence to bestow it upon the word. To be sure you allow the Holy Spirit must be present to the thoughts of the heart when men believe, but you are careful to tell us that such presence cannot take place otherwise than by thoughts or ideas. So that his presence is nothing but the word at last. But admit the deity to be present; on your plan he does nothing, he can do nothing. You give him but an epicurean station at best—a station of inactivity and indolence; or, to say the most, a station of observation and record. The carnally minded sinner can do very well without him. He can with his own agency and the almighty force of means, trace upon his own soul the sublime image of his maker, and create himself anew after God in righteousness and true holiness. O how different this from the uniform testimony of the sacred scriptures! Would to God it had never entered your heart nor fallen from your pen! In the end believe me, my dear sir, it will be found a wretched, delusive fiction.

Of the manner in which the supreme being operates upon the mind in regeneration, or of the precise nature of that operation, we cannot form any adequate conception, because it is something of which we are not nor can be conscious. We are conscious of the effects produced, not of the cause that produces them—conscious of the acts of

the new creature, not of its creation. That vivid perception, that piercing belief of gospel truths, and those holy affections of penitence, love, joy, gratitude and the rest which arise instantaneously in the soul when the divine power acts upon it through the word, are things of which we are conscious and can describe; but we can no more conceive of our creation anew, or of the work of the spirit on the soul, than we can conceive of our formation in the womb. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the spirit." That there is something hidden, something too deep and recondite for human ken in the work of the spirit in regeneration, is clearly asserted in this very remarkable text. We know the effects of the wind, we hear its sound, we feel the changes it produces in our bodies, we see its impression on objects around us, but with all the aids of philosophy we are unable to trace its origin, or understand its destination. We cannot penetrate the causes of its rise, nor tell the reason of its ceasing to blow. With all our improvements in science we are compelled to rest in the declaration of scripture: "God bringeth the wind out of his treasures." From the evidence of our own consciousness of its effects we know there is such a meteor as wind, but more we know not—inscrutable mystery bounds our sight. "*So* is every one that is born of the spirit." Just so mysterious is the secret, hidden work of the spirit in the soul. I see you smile, sir, at our "mystical regeneration," but it is a truth, solemn as any that ever dropped from the lips of our Saviour, that we know just as much of the causes and dying away of the wind as we do of the operation of divine power in the birth of the soul. Had the new birth of which our Lord was treating, been the very plain, comprehensible thing you seem to imagine—had it been altogether free from mystery or difficulty, why did Nicodemus stumble at it? Why did he dream of a second birth if there was no analogy between a spiritual birth and a natural one? Or why did the Saviour indulge himself in the use of terms so directly calculated to lead him into mistake, if there were no

immediate operation of the spirit, or no new creation intended? The matter is wholly unaccountable on your view of the subject. Had our Saviour meant nothing but the effect of truth in its own appropriate power—had he intended nothing but faith in his gospel, he could have said so. Or if, in speaking of this faith, he had made use of the metaphor *born again*, and seen his meaning mistaken by that master of Israel it would have been as easy as benevolent to have undeceived one who appears not to have been a captious but a sincere enquirer after truth. But he does not do this—he proceeds to assert and confirm the same thing; and though he corrects the false notion of Nicodemus with respect to a natural or carnal birth, yet he contends for one that is to be the effect of a divine operation:—"that which is born of the spirit is spirit"—contends for a birth that is spiritual like the cause producing it, and as to the manner of its production something that transcends human comprehension. Let our views of this subject be what they may it is clear to me yours are erroneous.

You would exclude mystery, or "what," in your estimation, "is the same thing, inconsistency." O how it grieves me, sir, to see you adopt the language of the enemies to the cross! Mystery is their watch-word. It is the cant of error in every shape and form. The moment a man turns his back upon the truth he begins to exclaim against mystery. He will believe nothing but what he understands. No—he will have no difficulties—no mysteries. His religion must be perfectly clear and unembarrassed. In a word, it must be *rational!* Such persons seem to forget that they repeat only the blasphemies of Hobbes and other infidels, when they thus raise the outcry against mystery. They forget no less the voice of fact and experience; or if they do not, but act consistently with their own assertions, they must in reality believe nothing at all. They who will admit no mystery into their religion, must agree to live without religion altogether. They can have no creed. Difficulties meet us every where—they start up in every department of human science. All nature is replete with mystery. From a pebble up to a world, from an

insect up to the divinity, mystery meets us at every step of our progress. Discard it, and the only alternative left is universal doubt, is a gloomy and detested Pyrrhonism. For you, sir, I hope better things, and once more beg leave to subscribe myself

Your sincere Friend,

And Servant.

LETTER III.

THE COTTAGE, APRIL 24, 1810.

DEAR SIR,

SUFFER me to call your attention to some observations which I have to make concerning what you have said on faith, and other topics of a practical nature, mingling themselves with your discussion of that subject. Without further preface I will quote what you say of faith, p. 26.

"The power of believing in every intelligent creature consists in the strength of the testimony. Believing is never either an independent or voluntary act. No man can believe without testimony. No man can resist the force of credible testimony, if he suffer it to enter into the view of his understanding. Neither disposition, nor will, nor motives have the least effect. Believing is an intellectual, not a moral act." Every branch of this paragraph seems to me to be essentially wrong. The power of believing certainly cannot consist in the strength of the testimony, for were that the case, belief would always follow from a strong display of evidence, which we know from universal experience does not happen. The mind has the power of resisting the strongest rays of light. There is beyond doubt other obstructions to believing than want of intellect and want of testimony. Both these may be possessed, or enjoyed perfectly, yet there may be no belief, because the mind may and does resist the strongest and most credible testimony. Remember, sir, the strong remark of Mr. Locke, that "earthly minds like mud walls resist the strongest batteries." It is this very resistance of testimony or truth strongly exhibited, that constitutes the guilt of men.

No man can resist credible testimony suffering it to enter into the view of the understanding. Does testimony im-

pel belief? Is faith a coerced, dependent and necessary act? So you say, when you allege that testimony cannot be resisted, and still more fully when you assert that it is "the highest, the most coercive and irresistible cause of believing in the universe." Thus it is that in despite of yourself you become the advocate of *necessity*, and in reality fall into the very error which you erroneously impute to others, destroy the freedom of man. Consider, my dear sir, what it is you do—You make a rational, intelligent and accountable creature; a moral agent, perform a certain act without moral principle, motive, or will; you make him perform a coerced, involuntary, necessary act. No necessarian, no fatalist, ever did more than this; and these principles granted, it would indeed be a clear logical deduction, that faith is not a moral act; it has nothing virtuous in it, nor can the want of it be a crime.

But the principle itself is fallacious—the human will does resist the truth, even when it has penetrated the understanding, and entered fully into the view of the mind. Balaam had the clearest and most distinct views of the truth—he was favoured with the visions of the Almighty, and was arrested in his headlong career by the rebukes of the angel of Jehovah, yet he resisted all this and did not believe to the saving of his soul. The Jews also heard the discourses of our Lord, who spoke with a force and authority superior to any thing the earth ever witnessed; they saw the innumerable miracles wrought by his hand; they beheld the awfully impressive phenomena of his crucifixion and death; they witnessed the scene of Pentecost, with all its wonders, where the gospel was preached in every tongue under heaven, accompanied with the most stupendous display of miraculous gifts; every sense, every avenue to the mind was strongly addressed, the subject was fully in the view of the understanding; and yet they did not believe. Well did Stephen upbraid their unbelief and wicked resistance of truth: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost"—What was this but a bold presumptuous rejection of truth; an open and daring offence against the clearest light, the most credible testimony?—What, allow me

to ask, was the unpardonable sin but the open and malignant rejection, or blasphemy of the truth, when it had been fully before the understanding? Such it surely was, but it is a sin that never did, nor can happen on the admission of your principles, which suppose that resistance to truth in any degree, much less in a degree that is direct and malicious, is totally impossible when it is clearly in the view of the mind. There is an uncircumcised heart, (a principle by the way which is never allowed to figure in any part of your system) which always operates to prevent faith, let the light be as strong as it may.

Neither disposition, will, nor motives, have the least effect. This is as far from truth as the proposition which precedes it. Prejudices, inclinations, will, and the like, have the greatest imaginable effect—yes, an effect which is often invincible. So well is this fact understood, that it has passed into an adage and been consecrated by verse,

> "Convince a man against his will,
> He's of the same opinion still."

A fondness for a pre-eminence or passion for applause with men had great effect on the minds of the Jews in Christ's time, and operated to the prevention of faith in him. "How can ye believe which receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that cometh from God only. John" 5. 44.

It was the rage of the day, the triumphant prejudice of the times to look for a sign from heaven accompanying the advent of Mesiah. "The Pharasees also with the Sadducees came and tempting him desired that he would shew them a sign from heaven." From a mistaken view of some highly figurative prophecies, they expected to see his coming attended with some bright and luminous appearance from heaven, and that not occurring they would not believe in him as the long expected Mesiah. "Except ye see signs and wonders ye *will not believe.*" Owing to this unhappy prejudice, that ill fated people continued to reject a Saviour and stumbled at his cross, as the Greeks from a prejudice no less violent, a passion for a false philosophy, thought

contemptuously of a crucified Redeemer as the object of hope and religious adoration.

"The Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness."

How awful, how alarming the picture which the sacred historian has given of Jewish prepossession, and the just judgments of God which closely pursued its footsteps to a definitive reprobation. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet *they believed not* on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore *they could not believe*, because that Esaias said again, he hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." John 12. 37—40. Here it appears very plainly that disdisposition, will, and motives have a great, nay, decisive effect. Love of the world, malignant prepossession and violent antipathies operated to produce a revolting determination of will against Christ, and to shut out forever belief in his gospel. Of them it is said, "how can ye believe? ye will not believe, they could not believe." These expressions prove beyond dispute that the inveteracy of mental habit, as well as a malignant predetermination of the will became the countervailing barrier to faith. They had the clearest testimony, the light of truth shone before them with a dazzling splendor, their understanding was fully informed, but wicked tempers, evil dispositions, and worldly motives chained down the mind and barred conviction. On account of this malignity of temper, and their resistance of the the strongest evidence, God gave them up to a hard heart and a reprobate mind. And then, if not sooner, their disposition, their will and their motives were such as absolutely to preclude belief. To them, at least, faith was impossible—*They could not believe!*

But in all degrees of this resistance of the truth, in all cases of unbelief, "this is the condemnation that *light is come into the world* and men loved darkness rather

than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light," i. e. believeth the truth, "lest his deeds should be reproved." John 3. 18—20. The love of darkness and hatred of light are the very dispositions, the very motives which induce men in every age to reject Christ, or in other words, take effect to prevent faith in the gospel. You admit, sir, that "dispositions or moral principles may affect, suffering the testimony to enter into the view of the understanding; but when it enters, the desire of life temporal or eternal, nor the fear of death can affect it." I do not know what idea you mean to convey by "suffering testimony to enter into the view of the understanding;" but it is clear you allow the fact, that moral principles or dispositions may prevent truth's having free access to the understanding, and if so, belief is effectually precluded, and that too by disposition, will, and motive. It is quite immaterial where truth is barred out, whether at the threshhold of the mind, or in its most intimate recesses, so the thing is done; but it is, I think, a distinction without a meaning, for truth or testimony has always entered into the view of the understanding when the terms in which it is conceived are apprehended, and when the evidences rendering it credible, are clearly understood. The reason why truth is not believed, is not because it is debarred entrance to the understanding, but on account of the revolting tendency of the heart, disposition and will. "You will not come unto me that you might have life." Were not this the case there could be no such thing as greater condemnation, for such condemnation supposes the clearest evidence, and that evidence fully apprehended. "And that servant which *knew his Lord's will*, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, *shall be beaten with many stripes*—Therefore to him that *knoweth to do good* and doeth it not, to him *it is sin*;" that is, his sin is of the deepest hue and his condemnation proportionably great. The guilt lies in possessing the clearest light or knowledge, and wickedly resisting it.

*Believing is an intellectual, not a moral act.** We have already seen, sir, how unphilosophical it is to speak of faith as an act of the understanding (for that is what you mean by intellectual) and will not therefore repeat any thing on that subject in this place, unless it be to observe, that faith is the act of an intelligent, rational and accountable creature; not the act of some select part of his constitution in which the balance has no concurrence.

As to the morality of faith, it is what cannot be denied on any principle of philosophy or revelation. The act of a rational and accountable being is in the very nature of things moral, and especially that act which you have said, p. 30, is performed in obedience to the gospel as a new law. "The first and fundamental requisition of this law is faith—the faith of Christ as the great *days man*, and the knowledge and belief of what he has taught." You will explain to us, sir, how an act which you call intellectual can be a first or fundamental requisition of the law of Christ, nay, his new and best law; or can be performed in conformity to such law; and yet not be moral!

Though you so positively assert that believing is not a moral act, yet we see you declare just the reverse after a few intervening remarks, when you make the following inference from what you had been saying: "Faith is therefore the radical grace." That which is a grace, and a radical grace too, must be moral. Thus the morality of faith is fairly conceded. Nor is this the only instance in which it is so conceded; for in p. 21 you call it a *divine faith*—"And as a divine faith is believing on the testimony of God, it will be a *divine faith*, and it will work in you with divine energy." That faith which is *divine* must also be *moral*. But indeed, sir, there is something superlatively mortifying in the comparison of these passages. To shew in

* By *moral* here, I understand the author to mean *morally good* or *virtuous*, and when he says, faith is not a moral act, I conceive him to say, faith is not a morally good or virtuous act. I do so because he generally uses the word in that sense, as in p. 44, where he calls a choice built on the divine promises a "moral or religious principle."

what way that which is *not voluntary*, is *not moral*, can be "the radical grace," can be "divine," can "work in us with divine energy," is what must baffle even your ingenuity. From premises so repugnant, so incongruous, a consistent deduction must, I think, be despaired of as even possible.

The attempt to prove faith to be something not morally good is neither new nor uncommon in our country. Many have done so, and now do it, with whom you would be loath to fraternise. To me it always has been matter of surprize how persons drawing proof from the volume of inspiration, could adopt a conclusion so hostile to its numerous declarations, and venture to say that faith has nothing of moral worth or virtue in it. Why is faith represented so constantly in the scriptures as so very important to man, and so pleasing to God, if it has nothing virtuous or moral in its nature? To the poor sinner it is every thing—it is all important. His salvation, from first to last, is connected with the exercise of that grace which embraces the glorious Redeemer in all his characters and offices—he is justified by faith, lives by faith, overcomes by faith, in a word, is saved by faith. Faith is that vigorous principle by which saints and confessors have "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, in weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of aliens." It is called precious faith in scripture to denote the high rank it holds among the graces of christianity: "To them that have received like precious faith with us—And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue," &c. 2 Pet. 1. 1—5. We also observe it designated by the epithet *unfeigned*, to teach us that the moral part of man is concerned in its exercise, and to distinguish it from that which is hollow and hypocritical. "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." 2 Tim. 1. 5. See also 1 Tim. 1. 5. It is also said in scripture to be *one*, to denote its high moral excellence, and also to shew that

there is but a solitary faith which stands connected with salvation. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

That faith is moral, appears from the value which God himself is pleased to put upon it. "Without faith it is impossible to please him," i. e. God. This implies that it is pleasing to the Supreme Being. When our Lord was on earth we see him honor and applaud faith wherever he found it. "O woman, great is thy faith—I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel—Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." That which is pleasing in the sight of God, that which the Saviour honors, must be a moral virtue.

On the other hand, the want of faith or unbelief is severely reprehended in scripture, "O ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt—O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken—Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not—Of sin because they believe not on me." If unbelief be criminal and reprehensible in the sight of God, its opposite, *faith*, must be a virtuous or morally good act.

That true faith is something morally good, is clear also from its being like every other grace, susceptible of improvement and increase—"having hope, when your faith is increased—We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly." 2 Cor. 10. 15. 2 Thess. 1. 3.

A similar conclusion may be drawn from its being tested by adversity. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1. Pet. 1. 7.

On the supposition of faith's not possessing moral worth, where would be the propriety of a comparison between the trial of faith and the trial of gold? How could its excellence be tested by severe temptations and afflictions if it were not moral? or how could it be found matter of praise, honor and glory at Christ's appearance, if it were

solely intellectual, and had nothing morally good in it? Will men receive glory for intellectual endowments at the appearing of the Saviour? or are acts of the intellect, matter of moral estimation in the sight of Deity? The answer is obvious,

These observations tend also, I conceive, to establish another proposition which stands opposed to your views of faith, that true saving faith is different in nature and kind from any other faith spoken of in the sacred scriptures; or in other words, there is a faith which has nothing morally good or saving in it. The characters by which genuine faith is every where distinguished in the word of God, are such as respect the quality, and not the degree of faith. When faith is characterized by the epithets, *precious*, *unfeigned*, and *one*, there is a clear designation of its nature and valuable quality, and not of its degree or quantity.—To apply the terms, preciousness, sincerity, or oneness to degree or quantity in any sense would be absurd, much more in one that is spiritual—It would be equally improper to compare the trial of faith with that of gold, or speak of its permanence and lustre, if respect is had only to the degree of it.

The apostle James distinguishes between a speculative, unproductive faith, and saving faith, and represents the first as no better than the faith of devils. "Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." Here there is a strong distinction taken between an unfruitful, inefficient faith, and that which evidences itself in good works; and the apostle declares that the matter of discrimination consists in something which devils have not, nor can have. What then is that which discriminates saving faith, from common faith, or the faith of devils?—in what consists the difference? Not surely in the assent of the mind to truth, for it is very certain from scripture testimony, that devils have high degrees of knowledge, and faith too, in that sense. "What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the

time—Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God—These men are the servants of the most high God who shew unto us the way of salvation. Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye?" And hell is represented as confessing the name of Jesus, Phil. 2. 10, 11, which clearly implies a high degree of belief, so far as it consits in an assent to the truth. But that difference must lie in the peculiar nature and essence of faith. There is a faith peculiar to saints which damned beings are destitute of, and wholly incapable of possessing. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. This passage asserts, concerning all that are lost, that they were blinded and *believed not*. Yet we know that they did believe in some sense, for they held the truth in unrighteousness, they made shipwreck of the faith, they departed from the faith, they believed a lie. And "many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7. 22, 23. These unhappy persons had faith of a certain sort, they thought themselves, and others too thought them believers; but alas! a gloomy, an eternal negative is put upon their faith—They *believed not*—they had not the peculiar faith of God's people. Like the God of this world who blinded them, they saw not as saints see it, the glorious light of gospel truth; its divine lustre was hid to them, and their faith never rose higher than that of devils.

That persons may have faith and yet be destitute of that real faith which is connected with salvation, and which the all pervading eye of omniscience approves, is impressively taught by our Lord, John 6. 64. "But there are some of you that *believe not*. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that *believed not*, and who

should betray him." Here it is said of Judas and other false hearted disciples of Jesus, that they *believed not*, though it is certain they did in some sense believe in him as the Mesiah, and for a time relinquished other pursuits to follow him; thus maintaining a clear distinction between a temporary faith, and that believing which has the term faith appropriated to it in the scripture. The case of the stony ground hearers of the parable affords decisive proof that there is such a thing as believing the gospel, and that with much emotion too, without having true faith—"They on the rock are they which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, *which for a while believe*, and in time of temptation fall away." Luke 8. 13. Faith in these persons was not associated with a single principle of grace, there was neither soil nor root, and consequently it was shortlived and soon perished away: unlike that of the good ground, an honest and good heart, which receivng the word, and keeping it, shot forth in a strong and luxuriant vegetation, and covered itself with abundant fruit. comp. Matt. 13. 20, 22. Mark, 4. 5, 8.

The faith of Simon the sorcerer was of the spurious kind. "Then Simon himself *believed* also: and, when he was baptised, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." But notwithstanding this faith which appears to have been accompanied with much emotion and wonder, the miserable Simon offered to purchase the Holy Ghost with money, and thus gave unquestionable proof that he had "neither part nor lot in this matter," that his "heart was not right in the sight of God;" nay, that he was "in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity." Acts 8. 13—23. The same is strikingly proven by Paul in his address to Agrippa: "King Agrippa believest thou the prophets: I know that thou believest." Acts 26. 27. Here was faith; and yet Agrippa was only almost persuaded to be, but was not altogether a christian.

I am now prepared, I think, for the conclusion of St. James: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is *dead*, being alone—But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith

without works is *dead*." That faith which is not permanent, is not operative, is not fruitful, is spurious, unsound, falacious—in a word, is *dead*, and stands clearly distinguished in the word of God from the *precious, unfeigned, one* faith of the truly regenerate. But this is a distinction sin, which you have not taken on this subject, and in avoiding it, your have establishing premises authorise an inference, justly and logically made, which must revolt you and every admirer you have. Without designing it I can readily believe you give a sin-divorcing faith to Judas and all the damned; you consecrate the faith of devils!

"You are," we hear you say, p. 21, "absolutely under wrath and in sin. If you receive it, as it is in truth the word of God, you will believe with as little doubt as you have of your existence, and it will certainly divorce your hearts from sin." And as a divine faith is believing on the testimony of God, it will be a divine faith, and it will work in you with divine energy." Had not Judas when stung with remorse, and threw down the price of innocent blood in the temple, has not every agonizing traitor who has sold his God and trembles at approaching vengeance, a full conviction that he is absolutely under wrath and in sin? What damned ghost, what fiend of darkness does not believe that he is *absolutely under wrath and in sin?*—Yes, they all *receive it as the truth of God*, they all *believe it with as little doubt as they have of their own existence.* The word of God "is equally forcible on the minds of angels and devils."

But you tell us this belief "will divorce the heart from sin." Then we arrive at the revolting inference with unembarrassed certainty. The heart of Judas was divorced from sin when convulsed with terror and overwhelmed with its own anguish: every trembling spirit on earth, or in hell, that feels the torture, the agonising regret of conscious guilt, undergoes a like change; they have what you say is partial regeneration: having received the mortifying and painful, but salutary truth that they are in sin, their creation anew, in Christ Jesus, is commenced. This is not all: "As a divine faith is believing on the

the testimony of God," and as they believe on the testimony of God, they have a *divine faith*—a faith that *will work in them* with *a divine energy!* Thus it is that your doctrine of faith applies equally to earth or to hell, divorces from sin all who believe themselves absolutely under wrath, and in sin, and makes their faith even the faith of devils and wailing ghosts, *divine*, nay, a *divinely operative faith*.

We must now hear you as a casuist, and see how you manage a certain case of conscience. "I am aware that a common case of conscience will bewilder you here. You will complain you cannot believe nor feel the love of God in your heart. These and similar cases of conscience are altogether of modern fabrication. They grow out of our fanciful opinions and homespun mysteries. No such case ever occurred under the preaching either of our Lord or his apostles. In all their preaching, and in all the conversions of which we read, we never read of a complaint they cannot believe, of a direction but to believe, of a mean or cause of believing, but the promises of God; of a story of conversion or experience of grace, but a mere profession of their faith in Christ, and in what he said; or of a fruit required but holiness. The apostles indeed prayed our Lord to encrease their faith; but it appears by his answer to have been the faith of miracles;' and one who had but little acquaintance with him or his doctrines, said, 'Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief; but he appears to have treated both the addresses pretty much as he did Peter when he proposed making three tabernacles, one for our Lord, one for Moses, and one for Elias, as words without meaning." p. 19.

Complaints of inability to believe or love God, with similar cases of conscience, are, you remark, sir, with much severity, matters of modern fabrication, and such as grow out of our fanciful opinions and homespun mysteries. Neither these cases of conscience, nor the opinions from which they flow, are of modern make. Nor yet are these mysteries (as you are pleased to denominate them) homespun. They are as old as the days of Protestanism at least, and may be seen in almost every book of theoretic and practical divinity, from that time till now. What-

ever claim we may have to the honor of exhibiting the *homespun* as to other things, we cannot do so with respect to *these*, which beyond doubt are fabrics of a foreign clime, and of antiquated date. They are, sir, as old as Martin Luther and John Calvin—I rejoice to add, they are as old as Jesus Christ and St. Paul.

You seem to forestal the reply that would be made to what you assert, in the notice you take of the disciple's praying for an increase of their faith, and of the weeping suppliant, who prayed Christ to help his unbelief; but with respect to both instances, you allege, the faith of miracles only was intended. A zeal for theory has certainly betrayed you into some inaccuracy in these remarks. Cast your eye, sir, upon the 17th chap. of Luke, v. 1—5, and you will observe that it was after our Lord had delivered to his disciples a very solemn charge, as to the performance of certain great and difficult duties of christianity, that they prayed "Increase our faith." It was under a deep impression of the difficulty attending the performance of these duties, and of their own weakness, that induced them thus to pray. And our Lord assures them the least true faith in him would surmount the greatest difficulties.

But granting it to be a faith of miracles for which they prayed, the argument would not be affected by the concession; for it is plain if a divine power was needed to enable the person to exercise that kind of faith which even a bad man may have, there is conclusive evidence to say that a divine power will be requisite for the production of a higher, a better faith. It must be allowed as difficult to believe the promise of eternal life, as to believe that which respects the exercise or display of miraculous gifts; and indeed fact proves the truth of this remark, for we read of many in the New Testament who had the faith of miracles, who had no faith in Jesus Christ as the saviour of sinners.

How you can know that the tender-hearted father who cried out in tears "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief," was one that had but little acquaintance with Christ and his doctrine, I am not able to say. There is no indi-

mation whatever of such ignorance; and it is undeniably clear that he must have had some intercourse with his disciples, as he had applied to them to relieve his son. Besides, we have no reason to conclude that he treated these prayers, for strength and increase of faith, with indifference, as you intimate; and there is positive evidence to say that he approved the petition of this affectionate father, because he made faith a pre-requisite to the deliverance sought; the suppliant asks for it, and the benefit was conferred. The difficulty, sir, is not solved. These passages still rebuke your doctrine, and will serve, while the world stands, as appropriate language to express the ardent importunity, the pressing solicitude of all such as are penetrated with a sense of their own utter weakness and need of divine aid. The time will never be when the trembling penitent shall not need to cry "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" Nor can the comprehensive prayer, "increase our faith," ever cease to be useful to the real christian or humble seeker. I would be sorry to believe you had never made use of it yourself!

But had these passages (which indeed are positive proof) been set aside, still the whole of our proofs would not have been exhausted. There would still have been some others which it is not easy to evade. Such are these; "Peace be to the brethren, and love with *faith* from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.—Wherefore we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, *and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.*" Eph. 6. 23. 2 Thess. 1. 11.

Here, sir, you see these primitive ministers of Christ (as all ministers should) pray with reference to the faith of the churches, that God would strengthen and perfect it; and with respect to the Thessalonian converts, for whom Paul and Sylvanus so constantly prayed that God would fulfil in them the work of faith with power, we find those faithful, humble men, just before, in the same chapter, thanking God for the growth of their faith. "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your *faith groweth exceedingly.*" *We*

are bound, yes sir, we are under awful obligations to thank God for such grace towards the people under our care, as well as to ask it for them; and it will be well indeed if we realize them, and so to act in discharge of them as to be "pure from the blood of all men."

There is still a higher example proposed for our imitation, and in reviewing it we recognize infallible proof as to the necessity of an interposition of divine power with reference to faith. It is that of our blessed Lord. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy *faith fail not.*" Luke 22. 31, 32. While we see the great intercessor pray for the preservation and even the very existence of Peter's faith, we need not be at a loss either as to what is truth or what is our duty.

In correspondence with the doctrines of the passages just now cited, allow me, sir, to lay before you other scriptures in proof of the opinion that a divine power operating on the soul, is the efficient cause of saving faith; in opposition to what is asserted in the passage before us, "that we never read of a mean or cause of believing but the promises of God." Your respect for the Westminster confession is often expressed, but it is unfortunate for you that your opinions are in perpetual hostility with its decisions. For, while that confession represents the word as an *outward and ordinary mean, that becomes effectual to sinners for salvation only by the power of the spirit,* you treat it as the only mean or cause of believing, give it almighty energy; nay, tell us that "it is the highest, the most coercive, and irresistible cause of believing in the universe." The difference between is immense.

I shall now proceed to inquire, from the word of God itself, who is in the right, you or the Westminster divines.

The subjoined passages prove indisputably that an operation of divine power is required, in company with the word, to enable the sinner to exercise a saving faith:—"*The hand of the Lord was with them,* [the preachers of the gospel*] and a great number *believed* and *turned* unto

* *The hand of the Lord.*—This phrase always denotes, in the language of inspiration, an immediate interposition of divine power.

the Lord—Who, when he was come, helped them much who *believed through grace*—By whom [a risen saviour] we have received grace, and apostleship, *for obedience to the faith among all nations* for his name—For unto you *it is given in the behalf of Christ*, not only *to believe on him*, but also to suffer for his sake—For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you; not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as *God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*—For to one *is given* by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another *faith by the same spirit**—But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith—To them that have *obtained like precious faith* with us, through the righteousness of God and our saviour Jesus Christ—According as his *divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness*—For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.† Acts 11.

Thus, in Acts 13. 11, it marks the act of divine power that struck Elymas the sorcerer with blindness. And particularly it expresses, sometimes, the impression and power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, 1 Kings 18. 46, "The hand of the Lord was on Elijah." When the hand of the Lord is said to be with the first preachers, we are to understand it to mean that a divine power attended their ministry to render it effectual to salvation.

* Some understand this, and the passage preceding it, to respect the faith of miracles solely. But such an interpretation seems to me much too confined, with respect to either of these texts; and as to Corinth. 12. 9, it is wholly inadmissible; for as the *gifts of healing* and *working of miracles* are distinctly and separately mentioned immediately after faith, it would make the apostle guilty of unreasonable tautology, even when he was discriminating (and no doubt with much precision) the Spirit's diversified gifts. But, allowing it to be the faith of miracles that is intended, the strength of the proof remains undiminished; for this obvious reason—that if the power of the Spirit was requisite to the exercise of that inferior kind of faith which even a bad man might have, it must be no less necessary to the production of real faith.

† Never was a text so much tortured with criticism as this has been, and that for one plain reason; if allowed to speak out in its

21—18. 27. Rom. 1. 5. Phil. 1, 29. Rom. 12. 3. 1 Cor. 12. 9. Gal. 5. 22. 2 Pet. 1, 1—3. Eph. 2. 8.

Among the many passages that are convincing to my own mind on this question, none are more so than those which occur in the 2d and 3d chapters of Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. There the apostle tells them, "my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but *in demonstration of the spirit and of power*; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but *in the power of God.*" Plain, solemn, and fervent as St. Paul's preaching was, the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit was nevertheless requisite to give it effect and carry it to the heart: and that very method of dispensing grace was designed to teach them a very important lesson, that their faith was not to stand in the wis-

own impressive style it would establish beyond doubt the doctrine of efficacious grace. If faith be what is *not of ourselves*, something not self-produced, something which human nature cannot in its present fallen, mutilated state, exercise, then the inference for a divine assistance is inevitable. The criticism by which the force of the passage is usually evaded is this: The relative touto *that*, in the text, being of the neuter gender, and the word pistis, *faith*, of the feminine, they cannot agree together, and consequently the relative must respect something else than faith. This criticism is too thin, too paltry even for a tyro in philology. Who, that knows any thing about language, does not recollect frequent instances of this very construction, in which the relative is thrown into the neuter gender, with the word *thing* understood without conforming to the gender of the word to which it refers? Agreeably to this remark, translate the Greek relative *that thing*, and you will see it easily and properly refer to the thing last spoken of—you will see every difficulty disappear. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and *that thing* [faith] not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Or if we render it according to Dr. Parkhurst, the sense will be still more precise and emphatic:—"Through faith; and *this* [thing] *especially* not of yourselves." A very striking example of this same sort of construction occurs Phil. 1. 28—"But to you of *salvation*," Gr. SOTERIAS, "and *that*," Gr. TOUTO, "of God." Here the Greek neuter relative can refer to nothing else than to a feminine noun—"But to you of salvation, and *this* [thing] *especially* of God." See Edwards's works, vol 3. p. 432. Parkhurst's Gr. Engl. Lex. on the word outos, and Doddridge in Loco, who produces several examples of such construction.

dom of man, but in the power of God,* That this is the the apostle's meaning, appears from what follows in the subsequent chapter: "who then is Paul, and who is Apollos but ministers by whom ye believed, even as God gave to every man. I have planted, and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." The truths delivered by these faithful preachers had their own individual agency, were instrumental only to the faith of these converts; it was the special agency of God that was the efficient cause of belief; *by whom ye believed, even as God gave to every man.* Planting and watering, or in other words, preaching the gospel and the administration of ordinances, even though performed with great ability and eloquence, and accompanied with miraculous gifts, were not any thing, had no absolute efficiency in themselves: the operative, the efficient cause of believing, was *God who gave the increase.* The increase of the word was faith and holiness in the hearts of the Corinthians, and that increase *God gave*, not merely by sending ministers and revealing the truth, as is alleged, for these abstractly considered, were not any thing, but by his own immediate energy.

Another strong passage in support of the same doctrine, is this: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints—and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power; which he wrought in Christ, when he

* It is vain to allege that the demonstration and power here spoken of, means the working of miracles which accompanied the apostle's preaching. Thousands saw these miracles, yet never believed, and thousands more might believe in some sense, and have no faith. It was something which attended Paul's preaching (that is the gospel) giving it emphasis and force, and resulting in a real faith—it was the demonstrative power of God which in an instant gives truth all its force to the heart, and enables the dead soul to exercise a living faith, that the apostle designed to express here.

raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Eph. 1. 18—20.

This text declares in the plainest language, and even repeats the idea, that the faith of Paul and the Ephesians was the product, or a result of the working of a divine power. The sacred writer dwells upon, and amplifies the thought: "the *exceeding greatness of his power* to us-ward that believe, according to the working of his *mighty power*."—And lest we should mistake the power which operated upon the souls of these christians, to enable them to believe, he identifies the power, declaring it to be the very same power which wrought in Christ in order to his resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of God in heavenly places. You, sir, say that the word of God is the sole cause of faith; and yet more, *the highest, the most coercive*, and *most irresistable cause of believing in the universe*; and you often contend that the operation of any other power to produce such an effect would subvert human liberty: but the Spirit of inspiration, as if looking down to our times to reprove them, asserts a Superior power, which effectually wrought faith in the minds of the primitive followers of Christ; and to cut off every pretext for thinking it the word, declares it to be the proper power of Deity, which resuscitated and exalted the dead body of Jesus to a supernal throne—"what the superlative greatness of his power [Eis] upon us who believe [Kata] by means of the effectual working of his mighty power."*

The apostle more than once afterwards in this epistle, uses the emphatic word energeia, *effectual working*, with reference to grace in the heart: once with respect to his own conversion and call to the ministry: "whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me [Kata energeian] by the *effectual working* of his power;" and once concerning the Spirit's continued operation upon, or rather, within himself, and the Ephesian converts for their edification and growth in grace. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, accor-

* Parkhurst on the Words.

ding to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, *that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that* ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, *that* ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," or [Kata] *by means* of the power *effectually working* [energoumenen] in us. Chap. 3. What decisive proof is here offered, that conversion and the whole life of grace in the soul, with all its variety and fulness is the effect of the effectual working of God's power! Was Paul of Tarsus snatched as a brand from the burning and made a minister of the gospel? It was according to, or by the gift of God given unto him? How? mediately given? by the word in its own appropriate powers? No surlely; but by the *effectual working* of God's power. Did Christ dwell in the hearts of the Ephesians *by faith;* that is, through the gospel preached by Paul, and known and believed by them? Were they, being rooted and grounded in love, able to comprehend in some good degree the unmeasured extent of the love of Christ? or did the very fulness of God inhabit their happy souls? It was because they were strengthened with might—not by the word, as you, sir, would say; but *by God's Spirit in the inner man—by his power working in them.* Paul preached, and they heard the gospel; yet something more was required to make it the power of God to salvation—something more required to the life of faith—the comprehension of divine love, and the participation of the divine fulness; and that something was the effectual energizing of God in the soul. For this, Paul bowed his knees to the Great Father of mercies; for this he ascribes glory, and summonses the whole church to ascribe glory to God "throughout all ages, world without end." O rare! O precious example for christian ministers and the ransomed of the Lord! When the prayer of faith rises from a bending priesthood,

the responsive shout of glory to God, for descending, overflowing grace will gladden the gates of Zion. It is said "we are all wrong." Too true, alas! "we have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water." We forsake God; we restrain prayer before him; we ask for no influence from him, nor expect any; but fabricate empty theories, miserable schemes which flatter our own vanity, soothe a reluctant, revolting pride of heart, and cherish unbounded prejudice. This is all they can do—the stream of life never gushes into them, to refresh the thirsty spirit. True enough, we are all wrong.

Let me trouble you, sir, with one more passage which I think decisive on this question: It is Col. 2. 12. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation [effectual working] of God, who raised him from the dead."

It is contended by some that the expression, *through the faith of the operation of God*, does not describe the operation of God as the efficient cause of faith but only that operation in raising Christ, which becomes the object of faith to us who believe in the power and operation of God, as displayed in Christ's resurrection, as the demonstration and pledge of our own resurrection. I cannot help thinking this comment, though sanctioned by some respectable names, a weak one. It does not agree with the context, which unequivocally affirms a change in the Colossians, that must (from the very terms in which it is expressed) have been the effect of an immediate operation of divine power, *a circumcision made without hands, the circumcision of Christ*, and *the quickening together with Christ those who were dead in their sins and the uncircumcision of the flesh.* The expression therefore can mean nothing else than that these converts had risen with Christ in a change, and through a faith, which were "of the operation, Gr. energeia, *effectual all-working of God.*"

That I am offering you no comments of modern fabrication, no homespun mysteries, you will readily perceive, sir, if you will open the 1st volume of Dr. Goodwin's works, who has given a very learned and copious

commentary to these passages in the precise view I have taken of them; and what is still more humiliating to you, he declares that most of the Greek fathers interpreted these passages in the same way. He particularly names Theophylact and Chrysostom, and from the last quotes these words: "The apostle's scope is to demonstrate by what already was manifested in them, the power of God in working faith, and to raise up their hearts to believe what was not manifested, namely, raising them up from death to life. It being (saith he) a far more wonderful work to persuade a soul to believe in Christ, than to raise up a dead man; a far more admirable work of the two."* As you have pledged yourself to the public, as well from the press, as by solemn vows, to retain the doctrines of the Westminster Assembly, I hope you will let this great man, who was one of them, persuade you to retract your errors and new model your creed.

"We never read of a direction but to believe." This assertion corresponds with what you say, p. 15. "But Christ's manner of preaching is out of fashion at the present day, You hear nothing from him of the current cant, pray to God to give you faith to believe. Pray, pray, strive, agonize, wait on till Christ comes and delivers you." Such preaching seems to have fretted you prodigiously, for I observe whenever you touch upon it, your manner becomes harsh; again and again you cast an eye of indignation towards it. After all I have some doubt whether you ever heard any one preach what you here suggest: "pray to God to give faith to believe;" that is, *pray for faith to have faith.* Surely, sir, you must have been mistaken. Bad as the times are, such folly can hardly be current. But while you ridicule such exhortations in the gross, and probably give them, without being conscious of it, an unfair representation—while you assert that we never read of a *direction but to believe;* never hear any thing of the current cant, *pray for faith, strive, agonize,* there is reason to doubt whether you had examined the New Testament.

* Goodwin's Works, vol. 1. p. 301.—Edwards's Works, vol. 5. p. 422.

What exhortation was that which our Lord gave the people, as "he went through the cities and villages?" It was this: "strive Greek, agonize to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13. 24. Hear him say again in the face of multitudes, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. 11. 12. And again; "he spake a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Luke 18. 1. And once more: "search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." And what was that direction which Peter gave to Simon the sorcerer? "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." Surely, sir, these directions have very much the aspect of what you call current cant.

"Of a story of conversion or experience of grace, but a mere profession of faith."—The conversion of Cornelius before he heard the gospel, is what you have asserted, p. 9; for you there tell us "he had been converted from sin to God by the Jewish scriptures." That he was converted to christianity we certainly know, and you have only to read the 10th chapter of Acts, to see a story of conversion. Paul twice relates the story of his conversion; once before an host of furious sanguinary bigots at Jerusalem, and again before a very splendid and honorable circle at Cesarea. These, sir, are some of the stories of conversion of which I read.

But perhaps your remark respects the relation of experiences before a church, or church judicatory; and if so, I can see no reason why a narrative which St. Paul deemed neither disgraceful nor impertinent in the presence of a maddening mob, or an assembly of nobility and princes, should be considered offensive before a church of Christ, or an ecclesiastical court. Some good men, who in reality are no enemies to experimental piety, disapprove of this practice. I confess I think differently. Should we allow there is no positive example of such practice, there is nevertheless constructive evidence of its propriety. Eminent saints of old do not appear to have studied so much reserve on the subject of personal and experimental religion

as some seem to think proper. We read of conferences which appear to be of this kind. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." Mal. 3. 16. The Psalmist invites the whole assembly of the pious to hear his narrative of grace: "Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." Elizabeth and Mary entered into very tender and intimate conversations on the subject of inward feeling. Luke 2. And the two disciples to whom the risen Saviour joined himself on their walk to Emmaus, conversed, afterwards, very feelingly and intimately concerning their exercises: "And they said one to another, did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" It is no less the law of christianity than the habit of piety to be prepared to give an account of itself on every proper occasion "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Affectation in religion is abominable. The indiscriminate and unsolicited relation of christian experiences, the idle and vain parade of religious feeling on every frivolous occasion, cannot be spurned too much. But this allowed, there are seasons when genuine piety would not shun a modest and reverent display of itself even in the presence of infidels and opposers.

Animated, living religion, though it affects the shade generally, yet it cannot always be hid. Even when restraints are imposed it cannot be coerced. The smothered fire bursts through the rubbish thrown upon it, and darts forth a vigorous, uncontroled flame for the conviction or edification of every beholder. The good David is a lively instance of this. He had resolved, he tells us, to restrain his tongue in the presence of the wicked—he was dumb with silence—he held his peace even from good, till his sorrow was stirred, and the bursting heart found vent in unrestrained communication. "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned; then I spake with my tongue." A cold intellectual religion I can readily conceive to be silent, reserved, and averse from exhibition. It is perfectly manageable and loves conceal-

ment. It veils itself in an impervious covering, and spurns the prying, inquisitive eye. It shrinks from display or investigation, and would only PROFESS. Such was not the piety of David. Such was not that of Paul. Though there be no plain, positive example of giving or receiving narratives of inward experiences, yet there is sufficient evidence from the very nature of internal religion, from the intimate intercourse and communion which should and does subsist among christians, from the full knowledge which every such society should have of the tempers, exercises and views of persons admitted to its holy communion, and from the positive but general instruction given in scripture to persons possessing religion, to be bold and explicit in their profession, and prompt in answering inquiries concerning their internal hope. In a concise history, such as that of the primitive church, it is not to be expected, my dear sir, that every transaction, every item of practice should have been detailed; and if every thing is to be rescinded from church rules but what is circumstantially revealed or related in scripture, you would soon find yourself in possession, of a bald ritual as well as of a mutilated creed. The admission of females to the Lord's supper, the practice of infant baptism, the use of tables and a sitting posture at the Lord's supper, the taking a text and delivering a regular systematic sermon, pronouncing the benediction at the close of every meeting, and many other usages, have as little said about them as stories of conversion, and yet you practice them without scruple.

Only be consistent, and require no greater evidence than you do in other cases, only admit that constructive evidence should regulate christian practice in many important instances, and all difficulty on the score of experiences will then be removed. Even a profession does not always appear in the narrative of admissions to sealing ordinances: So far from this being the fact, it is generally omitted. Shall we, therefore, say we will adopt what appears to be the current practice of the apostles and not even require a profession at all?—One positive example is quite enough for any christian minister, and that we have in the Eunuch's admission to baptism by Phillip. An attentive and

candid consideration of the history ought to convince any person that it is wholly irreconcilable with the idea of a *mere profession*. And Phillip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God." Phillip required *a believing with all the heart*, but such belief could not certainly be a mere profession of faith in Jesus Christ as the son of God. The words used would not shew, if they comprised the whole of the transaction on the part of the Eunuch, whether his faith was *one of the heart*, or one purely intellectual and speculative. He might have made such a profession and yet be very wicked. Thousands could literally now make it, and make it in truth too, whom no christian minister ought to baptize. To me it seems probable that what Phillip asserted as necessary, that is, a believing in which the heart, the whole system of holy and devout feelings were involved or implied, was substantially avowed and related by the Eunuch before he was baptized; though that avowal is not detailed in the very succinct account given of it by Luke. The expression of the sacred historian respecting the three thousand would seem to imply that such a profession of their faith was taken, as evidenced the warm interest of their hearts in the religion of Jesus or the truths of his gospel. "As many as gladly believed, were baptized." How was the discovery to be made who they were that *gladly believed*, if nothing but mere profession was resorted to on the occasion? Will it be answered that the exultation beamed in their countenances, and became visible to every beholder. Then certain enthusiasts have the best authority in the world for scanning mental religion by inspecting certain fluctuating and equivocal evidences of it (as they imagine) in the external visage? But pardon me, sir; I will not do you the injustice to believe you to be one of those who would apply physiognomy to the detection of mental character in any sense, much more a religious one.

There is another case still stronger and more pertinent to our subject. I mean that of the Ephesian converts, concerning whom it is said, "And many that believed came, *and confessed, and shewed their deeds.*" To you I need

not remark, that the fact alluded to in these words could not be the auricular confession of Papists, nor the drivelling tales of Shakers in order to absolution. What then could be meant unless we suppose it to be that these converts recounted freely and acknowledged penitently the folly and wickedness of their past lives, confessed the saviour and a reliance on his blood, and with an open declaration of what they had once been, and what they then were, sought admission to the bosom and privileges of the church. And this is all I would contend for in a story of conversion. At any rate this passage renders it indisputable that the primitive practice embraced something more than *mere profession*. We certainly know from the history of the ages immediately succeeding the apostolic, that it was the uniform practice of the churches to admit persons to communion with them in the very forms which you would condemn as unscriptural; nay, as modern fabrications. This appears from the relation given by Augustine, as cited by Dr. Owen, of the admission of Victorinus, a platonic philosopher.*

"Another prevailing opinion, near akin to this," you go on to say, "is, like it, a very great obstruction to the faith of the gospel; I mean that the knowledge of God, derived from his word, is very different from the knowledge acquired by the spirit. And the passage on which it is pretended to be supported is grossly perverted. "The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life." p. 20.

Where, among whom, I venture to enquire, has it been a prevailing opinion, that the knowledge derived from the word, and acquired by the spirit, are different? Do you intend the Western Presbyterian Churches?—If you do, I am bold to say you have slandered us. They hold no such opinion! and consequently have no occasion to pervert St. Paul to support it. Nor do I believe that the notion is prevalent any where. The wildest, the most erratic sects, even Halcyons and Shakers, would spurn the charge as calumnious. You subjoin: "The formal, unmeaning, unbelieving use of the means of grace, so often prescribed at

* See Owen on the Spirit, vol. 2. p. 42.

this day to sinners, while they wait till the spirit comes to sanctify them, never was prescribed in the Jewish or christian church." More calumny, sir!—No; the prescription never has been, much less has it been often made. You cannot shew the people who are in the habit of prescribing the *formal, unmeaning, unbelieving use of means!*—There cannot be better proof that this heavy imputation is unfounded than you elsewhere have given yourself in declaring it to be the current cant of the day to exhort sinners: "Pray to God to give faith—pray, strive, agonize." Here we see specification of object, and agonizing earnestness to obtain it, assigned to the current cant. Now, sir, I should think it physically impossible that there should co-exist and be current at the same time, and among the same people, instructions to agonize for faith, and prescriptions for the formal, unmeaning use of means.

I have no doubt, however, it has been avowed and supported too from very obvious scripture testimony, that all means, not excepting the word itself, are in themselves unavailing, unless accompanied with a divine influence. We do believe and say without hesitation that the word, though an excellent mean of grace, cannot of itself operate faith in the soul, and that without the ministration or present agency of the Holy Spirit it is a dead letter, an inefficient instrument that regenerates no heart. If this be what you call a gross perversion of 2 Cor. 3. 6, "The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life," we own to the charge. These views of the subject are not modern; they are no novelty, as you insinuate. The divines of the 17th century, whom you affect to admire and copy, will, if you look into them, urge you with the same doctrine. Hear one of them, sir: Dr. Owen, speaking of the promise of the spirit, Acts 1. 9. says, "Take it away, suppose it to cease as unto a continual accomplishment, and there will be an absolute end of the church of Christ in this world. No dispensation of the spirit—no church. He that would utterly separate the spirit from the word, had as good burn his Bible. The bare letter of the New Testament will no more ingenerate faith and obedience in the souls of men, no more constitute a church-state among them who enjoy it,

than the letter of the Old Testament doth so at this day among the Jews. 2 Cor. 3. 6, 8."* If this is not sufficiently explicit, take the following: "I say it is so come to pass amongst many who profess they believe the gospel to be true, that the name or naming of the spirit of God is become a reproach. So also is his whole work. And the promise of him made by Jesus Christ unto his church, is rendered useless, and frustrated. It was the main, and upon the matter, the only supportment which he left unto it in his bodily absence, *the only means of rendering the work of his mediation effectual in them*, and among them. For, *without him* all others, as *the word*, ministry, and ordinances of worship are *lifeless and useless*."†

It is, I believe, your opinion that there should be no antecedent acquirements to faith, no use of means, no striving, agonizing or praying anteriour to belief. You ask, "How will you pray, or read, or hear, acceptably to God or profitably to your own souls, while you live in unbelief? Will it profit you to read the word of God, and not believe it? to be a hearer and not a doer of the word? 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son.' p. 24.

I am not mistaken, therefore, when I represent it to be your opinion that the use of means, such as hearing, reading, praying, and the like, should not be antecedent to faith; for, if done in unbelief, they dishonor God, give him the lie, and cannot be profitable to the soul. All this would do very well were it not for one very perplexing circumstance. It is this: If I can neither *hear*, *read* nor *pray* acceptably to God nor profitably to my own soul without faith—if all such hearing, reading and praying be offensive, nay, gives the lie to God, while I am in unbelief—if I am never to hear, read or pray but with faith, how am I to get that faith? The scripture informs me that "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word

* Owen on the Spirit, vol. 1. p. 309.

† Owen on the Spirit, vol. 1. p. 87.

of God;" which implies that hearing or reading the word were means that anteceded, or were in order to faith. On the contrary, you represent it as odious, insulting and abominable in the estimation of God, to hear or read without faith. How then am I to possess myself of faith? There is but one way of getting it at all conceivable, and that is *inspiration*. Without it faith is, on your plan, both physically and morally impossible.

The use of means is necessary anterior to faith of any sort, and especially of that precious faith which is real and saving. We have already seen our Lord exhort the unbelieving Jews to search the scriptures, and for doing so, we observe the Bereans very honorably mentioned.—"They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so." And what was the result? Just, sir, what your system claims in the outset: "Therefore many of them believed."

But praying in unbelief, stumbles you also. "How would you pray in unbelief? Could you ask forgiveness through Jesus Christ in whom you do not believe?" "Dare you approach him as an absolute God who declares that out of Jesus Christ he is a consuming fire? 'He that turneth away his ear from the law, his prayer shall be an abomination.'" Ibid. According to you, none but a *believer*, or what is the same thing, none but a *regenerate person* ought to pray to God, or if he has the temerity to do so, his prayer is an abomination. The only proof you offer is that from Prov. 28. 9. which I have seen applied in the same way for several years past. The prayer of a hypocritical deceiver, or false-hearted professor, is truly an abomination to a holy God; but, sir, how is this to affect the case of humbled penitents who cry for mercy? Are they to wait till they have faith in a crucified Jesus? Must they repress every ardent, anxious aspiration of their convulsed, agitated spirits, that would mount aloft to a throne of grace for relief, till they are regenerated?—So you would instruct us; but sacred truth gives a very opposite lesson. We follow the bleeding publican to the temple—we see him smite on his breast, not daring

so much as lift his eyes to heaven—we hear his fervent prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Heaven heard him: "This man went down to his house justified." We enter the retirement of afflicted Ephraim and hear him bemoan himself thus: "Thou has chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." We hear him declare the process of his conversion, yes, the very conversion for which he prayed: "Surely after that I was turned I repented; and after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." You will rejoin, probably, these suppliants had faith! True, sir; but what faith was it? Not the faith which is connected with justification; not the faith of the regenerate, as the passage clearly expresses.

Much, however, as you dislike the use of means before faith—much as you reprobate antecedent doings and acquirements, you are unhappy enough to drop into the same error, and enjoin on your hearers certain pre-requisites to believing. After exposing very formally, p. 14, the idea of the honest and good heart's meaning a regenerated heart, you proceed to say: "No! the good and understanding heart in the parable is a reflecting, inquiring, examining heart." Soon after you explain to us your favorite phrase of *digging deep* in these words: "Intellectual and spiritual digging and calculation consists in reflection, diligent inquiry and consideration." And again p. 20, you thus retouch the subject: "To consider, reflect, calculate, in short to dig deep till they settled their faith and hope on Jesus Christ himself, was the uniform spirit of the gospel under both dispensations." Behold then, my dear sir, your antecedent acquirements, a *reflecting, inquiring, examining heart*, and *intellectual and spiritual digging*, or *reflection, diligent inquiry and consideration!* And that they are antecedents to faith is indisputable from this, that a good examining heart is not a regenerate heart, which with you is the same thing as a believing one; and also, that considering, reflecting and calculating are to be pursued till the person's faith is settled on Jesus Christ.

I might now, sir, address you in the same style of expostulation which you have used with others: "How will you dig deep, calculate, examine or consider acceptably to God, or profitably to your own soul, while you live in unbelief? Will it profit you to reflect and inquire diligently into the word of God, and not believe it? to be an inquirer and not a doer of the word? 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar.'" Nothing but faith can consecrate any doing—it must have no antecedent; no, without it we but insult God and heap disgrace and ruin on our own heads!

There is a farther difficulty with which this scheme of things is pressed. We are not allowed to hear, read or pray in unbelief; but while in that very state we are called upon to dig intellectually and spiritually, or to reflect, consider, and examine into spiritual things: The difficulty then is, how are we to reflect, consider and examine, without hearing, reading or praying? If you will, my dear sir, teach us how to reflect without information, and examine without evidence—to dig till we get faith, and yet have it before we read, hear or pray, you shall be at liberty to enrol our names on the list of your followers.

But why so squeamishly reject the outward and ordinary means of grace, and substitute intellectual and spiritual digging? Why spurn the well known means, and adopt others less known and more equivocal? Or why decry every antecedent to faith when there must exist something of this kind, and when you yourself, in despite of theory, admit there is.

It is inevitable that certain things be done in unbelief. The word must be preached or read to us, or we must hear or read it for ourselves; the mind must perceive the truth, and weigh its evidences, before belief can take place. Such is the order of nature—such the constitution of man. Why then declaim against the use of means and antecedent acts said to be done in unbelief, when the state of things is unalterably fixed? To say that nothing shall be done in unbelief, or that there shall be nothing antecedent to faith, is the same thing as saying we must believe without preaching, reading or perceiving the truth;

or rather it is the same thing as saying that no sinner ever was or can be saved, because no one can take the first steps towards salvation but in unbelief, and to do so is abhorrent, is abominable in the sight of God. No, he must believe before he reads, hears or understands the truth, or be damned forever. Faith without means, without antecedents, or damnation, is alas! the dismal alternative.

I have said that faith is all important to the sinner, and speaking of it I have frequently called it saving faith. To guard against mistakes I now observe, that I do not mean by this that faith, more than any other grace, has any thing saving in it. Were that so, our religion would not be what it professes to be, a religion for the guilty. Could present virtues, however acquired, obliterate past guilt, Christ had died in vain. It is the object of faith that saves us. Jesus Christ, whose righteousness and blood lays the foundation of our pardon, and whose living power destroys our enmity and works grace in our hearts, is the only saviour. But faith becomes important as it apprehends this only saviour, as without him we can have no interest in the covenant of redemption, nor be saved. This is what we mean when we say that we are saved by faith, and the mode of expression is justified by scripture, as in Luke 7. 5: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Some have objected to the epithet *saving*, as applied to faith; but I think the apostle authorises its use to distinguish the "faith of God's elect" from common faith, because it is in that very style he draws the distinction himself, Heb. 10. 39: "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the *saving of the soul.*"

When we say faith is the gift of God, we are not to be understood as meaning that it is not the act of the creature. We believe it to be such; but then we believe also that it is the act of the creature enabled by divine power and grace to exert himself in that particular way. The act is ours, but the power enabling us to believe is God's. And it is in this sense only we conceive faith to be the gift of God. To say that faith is his gift because he hath given us the word, which is the cause of faith, is saying just nothing to the purpose. The word is the gift, but the act

by which that gift is received cannot, with propriety, be called his gift unless he enables us to exercise it by some direct influence. Had you bestowed an alms upon the beggar at your door perishing with hunger and shivering with cold, would you pronounce his reception of your favour *a gift*, and *your gift?*—You could not. But if he were as helpless as wretched, if his limbs were so diseased or benumbed as to be unable to help himself or receive your alms, and while you offered him the things he needed you should, by some secret influence, remove the disease and torpor of his limbs, and thus put it in his power to come and accept them; in such a case the act by which he received your benefit might properly be called your gift, as well as the alms received. This faintly represents the case before us. God has sent his son, he has given his word containing the promise of life, he has ordained the ministry, he has instituted ordinances; these are his gifts: and if, in addition to his other benefits, he communicates power to accept his gracious gifts to creatures otherwise unable to do so, then that very communication aiding them to accept the proffered blessings, is his gift too. Solemn vows, you say, sir, have bound you to the divinity of the Westminster school, and that represents the natural man as "altogether averse from good, dead in sin, and *not able, by his own strength, to convert himself*, or *prepare himself thereunto.*" Now, if God, (as the same divinity *teaches,*) *enables such an one by the power of the Holy Spirit, to answer the call of the gospel, and embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it;* this very answering the call and embracing the grace offered, in other words, this believing the gospel, is the gift of God. It is in this sense that faith, love, and every other grace are said to be the gifts of God. The word gift always supposes something to be given or done by the person conferring it, which the person receiving it could not effect of himself; and if faith be the gift of God, he must assist us in the performance of it by a present energy, otherwise there could be no propriety in calling it his gift more than eating, drinking, hearing, or seeing could be so called by a person denying an immediate and particular providence.

The doctrine of mediate gifts is not known in fact; it never was taught in the school of Westminster, nor yet in the school of Christ.

Yes sir, faith is the gift of God not because he has furnished the matter to be believed, but because his present, immediate grace enables us to perform the act. This I have clearly proven by shewing it to be the matter of prayer and of thankfulness to God, and by producing many clear and forcible testimonies of scripture asserting the doctrine. Faith is beyond doubt, the act of a creature touched into life by a divine power; the act of a new-born, living soul, not one, as you assert, who is dead in tresspasses and sins. This the Saviour taught when he said, "Whosoever *liveth* and believeth in me, shall never die. But ye believe not; *because ye are not of my sheep*, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. *He that is of God* heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not *because ye are not of God.*" John. 8. 47—10. 26, 27—11. 26.

The clear dictate of these texts is that faith is the characteristic exercise of *one that liveth*, i. e. one who is quickened by divine power, of *him that is of God* and of *Christ's sheep*, for none others hear his words, and consequently will not or do not believe on him. These, with many other passages of the same kind, are wholly inexplicable on your scheme of divinity, which recognizes nothing in the corrupt, unregenerate mind that can in the least obstruct or prevent belief in Jesus Christ. You contend that carnal, dead sinners can believe, and live in consequence of their faith. The scripture assumes the opposite position—*he that liveth and believeth shall never die.* You imagine that no dispositions, motives, or will, in unregenerate, carnal men, can operate to the prevention of faith when light is present to the view of the mind, The Saviour let us know that the cause of unbelief in the Jews to whom he told the truth plainly, and before whom existed the demonstration of all his works, was the unrenewed state of their minds; or it was, in his own words, *because they were not of God, were not of his sheep.*

I shall add only that the faith of the real christian is something more than a mere intellectual act—something more than merely believing the truths of the gospel. This many do, and yet never confess Christ: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but, because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." John 12. 42. It is a cordial reception of the truth, a hearty acquiescence in and reposing the soul upon it for salvation—it is an embracing of the truth, in which the heart takes a warm, affectionate interest: "If thou believest with all thy heart. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Suffer me, my dear sir, to say that this intellectual faith of yours never yet saved a single soul.

I am,

With sincere regard,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

THE COTTAGE, MAY 18, 1810.

DEAR SIR,

THE doctrine of immediate agency in conversion, is thought by its opposers to be highly irrational and absurd; and it is upon this ground, next to ridicule, that it is thought to be most vulnerable. Admit it to be as repugnant to the dictates of reason as you please, the question occurs with proportionable force: how did the idea receive currency? how has it been so generally diffused among mankind? why do Christians, Jews, and Pagans generally conspire to believe that the Deity does in some way operate upon the minds of his creatures to form them to virtue and happiness? Why should it hold a conspicuous place in the massy volumes of oriental mythology, and the polished speculations of the most virtuous heathens as well as in the creed of Calvin and Jansenius? Nations so remote as to time and local situation, persons so different in circumstances, character, and pursuits admitting the same truth, believing the same general doctrine, must, I should imagine, draw from some common fountain, and as that cannot be reason, what is it? Fancy, do you say?—Where then is the archetype from which she took the idea? for be assured this power never originated it. She can compound and vary old ideas, but she never created a single new one. Nothing else but revelation presents itself as the source of this very general opinion. Either you must allow it to be highly rational, perfectly accessible to reason in its feeblest as well as its more vigorous efforts, or that it is the communication of Deity. To this result, I can certainly have no objection, as that by fixing its origin establishes the truth and authority of the doctrine for which I contend. But permit me to observe, that while I believe reason never to have originated the doctrine, but

to have derived it from a superior source, yet I must be allowed to think that when revealed, it is entirely consonant with the descisions of reason, altogether suited to the condition of man, and congenial with the dictates of a great and sublime philosophy.

I rest the proof of this doctrine on revelation solely, and while the anxious heathen hailed with a glowing bosom its dim reflection, I rejoice that I behold it beam forth from the volume of truth with a divine radiance to settle our faith and direct our practice.

It has been doubted by some whether you have denied the reality of an internal operation of the Holy Spirit upon the soul in regeneration; while others less charitable have thought you did really deny it, but that you were careful to conceal that denial in language so dark and Jesuitical that if pressed in the controversy, you would be able to elude your antagonist by saying, you did not mean so. I cannot hesitate with the first, and should be sorry indeed to think with the last. Though the sentiments you deliver are not as clearly expressed as I could wish, yet I think them sufficiently so to justify a belief, that you hold to no direct operation of the spirit in our conversion, or sanctification, but solely in the operation of truth itself, in its own almighty energy.

We have already seen you declare that "we never read of a mean or cause of believing, but the promises of God"—We have seen you solemnly aver that the word of God "is the highest, the most coercive and irresistible cause of believing in the universe." These passages, were there none other in your book, are quite sufficient to shew that you believe in nothing else as operating to produce faith, but the word only. It is the sole mean or cause of believing, there is none other; and as to its tending to produce that effect, its power is superlative, it stands peerless in the universe. In conformity to these declarations, is what you remark concerning the written word, p. 14. "Receive as it is in truth the word of God, and it will work in you with everlasting and Almighty energy." And again you observe; "admitting any operation you please, it must rest upon the testimony of God some way or other, and

that testimony is the cause of it." p. 22. Now it is plain enough that there can exist no other cause of impressions or operation on the human mind, but the testimony of God or his written word; for let what you please be conceived, this must be the cause of it—it is the cause of all causes with respect to mental operation in a moral sense. Nor is it possible there should exist any auxiliary cause, since that itself possesses Almighty energy. Such aid, such an associate in operation is wholly inadmissible on your plan. To speak of the Spirit's operation would be perfectly idle and insulting where omnipotence is already supposed.

It is true you sometimes speak of the spirit as concerned in the operation on the mind, which results in faith and holiness, and of his being present and abiding with the church; but by this mode of expressing yourself, nothing more is meant, than the presence of the written word revealed by the Spirit, and its operation on the hearts of men by its own intrinsic power. "These immediate gifts of the Spirit are withdrawn from the churches, but he abideth forever according to his promise, speaking the same things to us by record which he spake to them by inspiration." p. 9. By the Spirit as operating faith and sanctification, we are to understand your meaning to be, that the word does so, and by the presence of the Spirit, the existence of the divine records. When St. Paul speaks of that divine power which manumits the soul from the darkness and slavery of sin, he says, "now the Lord is that spirit: and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." But to accommodate this and all such scriptures to your theory, a slight variation should be adopted. "Now the word is that Spirit, and where the word of the Lord is, there is liberty." Were this scripture, sir, it would admirably express your opinion. But that I do not mistake your ideas on this subject will appear more fully from the quotations I shall have occsion to make in the progress of the discussion to which I am now about to address myself with reference to the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Having explained the office and operation of the Holy Spirit to have consisted only in the revelation of truth

and the working of miracles, in attestation of the truth you have these remarks, p. 5, 6, 7, "this gift of the Spirit was itself a proof of a real conversion from sin God; therefore we read of the sealing of the Spirit, the earnest of the Spirit, the first fruits of the Spirit"—"Indeed the indwelling of this Spirit seems to have been a decisive proof of conversion, and the want of it, of a state of nature"—"But this Spirit never was given in any immediate agency to any man till after he had believed, and his faith never was ascribed to any immediate agency antecedent to conversion"—"And though this gift of the Spirit in his immediate agency was general in the infant church, it never appears to have been conferred on any individual before conversion—never appears to have wrought upon them any other way but by representing the truth to them in words by the mouths of the apostles; and then conversion or sanctification never was ascribed to any other cause or agency but to the Spirit by the word, or what is the same thing, to faith in the word of the Spirit, or to the Spirit, and it was the effect of faith in his word." And as a complete index to the meaning of these passages, I will introduce what you say p. 53, where you abstract the principal doctrines of your discourse. "I have now endeavored to shew you that the new birth is a spiritual or moral birth. That it is wrought in the heart by his written word in its appropriate powers. That the spirit never was promised or given to perform any immediate operation, till 'after man had believed,' and that the new birth never was ascribed to any immediate agency."

I shall now attempt a distinct consideration of the several propositions contained in these citations; and the first I shall notice is that *the miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which was general in the infant church, was a decisive proof of conversion, and its absence the evidence of a state of nature.* Whether the gift of the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous powers, were general in the primitive church is not material for me to enquire; but that such gift was a decisive proof of conversion cannot be true. Had the first christians been in general endued with the

miraculous presence of the Holy Ghost, and had that been absolute proof of real conversion, then it would have been true that all these converts were sincere, and that there could have been no hypocrites nor false professors among them; or if there were any, that their want of conversion could have been very easily detected by others from the circumstance of their being destitute of the Holy Ghost. I need not tell you the fact was otherwise. Multitudes were insincere, and their want of genuine conversion was not known to the church till their apostacy took place.—"They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." These apostates never were converted, yet their want of religion was never known till their defection from the church made it plain. If this gift of the Holy Spirit were a decisive proof of conversion, and the want of it a proof of a state of nature, then Cornelius was not converted, as you have said he was, before Peter preached to him, for not till then was the Holy Ghost given to him. Or if this were the case, it is strange the apostle did not detect Simon the sorcerer before the event of his wicked offer to buy the Holy Ghost developed his real character. But there is positive evidence that many persons were endued with these miraculous powers, and yet were in a state of nature.

In the day of Judgment many will plead that they had prophesied, cast out devils and wrought wonders in the name of Jesus, whose want of conversion will be proclaimed in the face of the universe—"*I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.*" Jesus Christ imparted to Judas, his base betrayer, the gift of shewing signs in his name; yet it is known, as we have seen from early notices in his history, that he "believed not," had no genuine faith, and was "a devil."* And the apostle Paul in his 1st epistle to the church of Corinth, very clear-

* See John 6. 64, 70.

ly intimated, that miraculous gifts may be possessed without charity or true religion.

A second proposition is, that the only cause of regeneration or faith is the written word.

The Westminster Confession of Faith allows that the Holy Spirit can and does regenerate and secure a certain description of persons without the ministry of the word; and specifies infants dying in infancy, and others who are not capable of being outwardly called by the word.—But, sir, your scheme of religion which involves a very different doctrine, and makes no provision for infants, idiots or heathens, has to my mind, features the most forbidding, nay, the most horrible that can be imagined. The scripture, and indeed the very scripture which serves as the base of your discourse, informs us that none but regenerate persons will ever enter into the kingdom of Heaven. But we are taught by you to believe that regeneration is wrought in the heart by the word in its own appropriate powers, and that the spirit never was given in any immediate agency to any man till he had believed. There is then no hope for all those who are incapable of being outwardly called by the word. Perish they must! Thus, at one destructive blow, your scheme hurls into perdition the whole family of idiots—the whole infantile and heathen world. Not one of them can ever enter God's kingdom. The thought strikes a chillness through my soul while I write. Good Heaven! who can admit for one moment a prospect so doleful, so full of horror? Can any one who has lost a child in infancy, indulge an idea so dismal? If you ever did ask your own bosom? I see a subterfuge which offers a retreat from an objection so formidable, it is this: that as infants or idiots cannot understand the law or the gospel, and as heathens are not placed under either the one or the other, they cannot be the subjects of enmity against God, and consequently cannot need regeneration. They may therefore be saved through the sacrifice of the son of God on the cross, though they never have heard of it. But I would be informed in what way the atonement of Jesus can be applied to their benefit. Two ways, and but two are conceivable; *by faith*, or *by the immediate* agency of the

Spirit. The first is physically impossible; the second, you assert positively, *never was promised, never was given* without faith. Or will it be alleged, that as to infants, they are without *sin*, and dying in that state must be happy though not regenerate, and that heathens living up to the light they enjoy, may be saved without faith, or which is the same, regeneration? But if children are not sinners in any sense, why do they suffer? why do they die? And if original sin attaches, then they need a change to fit them for heaven. And with respect to heathens being saved without faith, without regeneration, without any operation of the spirit of God who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth, merely by diligently framing their lives according to the light of nature, I have no hesitation to say the doctrine is false; or if true, overthrows the whole christian fabric. "To assert and maintain that they may," says your confession, "is very pernicious and to be detested." ch. 10, § 4.

Another proposition nearly allied to the one just considered is, *that the Holy Ghost never was promised or given to any man to perform any immediate operation till after he had believed.*

We have already seen that personal conversion and the gifts of the Spirit are not inseparably connected, which affords a complete refutation of the idea that the Holy Ghost never was promised or given to any man prior to faith, for it is certain such gifts were imparted to persons who never had any true faith whatever. In addition to that evidence, let me direct your attention to a case directly in point; it occurs on the very first page of Luke's history: "And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, *even from his mother's womb.*"* To the baptist John in absolute infancy, and before faith was practicable, it was promised, you see sir, that he should be the subject of an immmediate operation of the Holy Ghost, and there is no doubt the fact corresponded with the prediction. And of those apostates, who are supposed to crucify the son of

* Luke 1. 15. comp. v. 44.

God afresh and put him to open shame, it is said, that besides illumination, they "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost;" which clearly implies that the Holy Ghost in his immediate operation, was imparted to persons who had no faith; which with you, means the same with regeneration. The Holy Spirit is frequently promised for the extension of truth, and the production of moral changes in the world at a period much posterior to that at which you think the Spirit was withdrawn. Take the following instance: "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance forever." Isa. 32. 15—17. Here, sir, is a prophesy, or if you will, a promise for the pouring out of the Spirit, which has never yet been fulfilled, and which is to have its completion in changing the moral condition of the whole earth, consequently it was not made to the faith of those in whose happy experience it is ultimately to receive its accomplishment. We meet with a similar promise, Zach. 12. 10. "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace, and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." This promise respects the general conversion of the Jews to christianity, and that it could not have been made to the faith of that nation, nor yet fulfilled after believing, is clear from this, that their faith and penitence are the very objects embraced in the promise itself.

Our Lord also promises the Spirit, and specifies the purposes for which he should be given. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you, and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of Judgment." John 16. 7, 8.

You believe, sir, this promise respects only the revelation of truth, and its confirmation by miracles. But while I allow these objects to be concerned in it, yet I contend there are others involved, no less important and weighty. I think, and I hope I am able to prove, that a much more extensive accomplishment was designed than what it received in those respects. and that looking down beyond apostolic times, it respected the ministration of the Holy Spirit to the end of time in aiding a faithful ministry, impressing truth upon the hearts of men, and thus convincing them of sin, righteousness and judgment. I found this opinion upon other analogous passages which relate to the same facts, as well as upon the developement given to these promises in the history of the church. In the 14th chapter of John, our Lord had soothed the sorrows of his disconsolate followers with a similar promise; "and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive; because it seeth him not; neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; *I will come to you.*" In this passage we have an absolute promise, not only of the descent of the comforter, but also of the actual presence of Christ himself in the church. This accords with the very consoling assurance which the Saviour gave his disciples when he invests them with a commission to preach the gospel and administer ordinances; "Lo! *I am with you* alway, even to the end of the world."*

Here his promise to be present with his ministers is coextensive with their commission to preach, and the exist-

* Matt. 28. 20. Socinian writers imagine *the end of the world* to mean the end of the apostolic age: but neither the context nor the rules of sound criticism will justify this exposition.—Christ is in this place speaking of his own dispensation, and instituting an order of men for its instruction and discipline; circumstances which both respect the entire extent of his kingdom on earth—comp. verses 18, 19. The expression, therefore, must mean the consummation *of all things*. One of the best rules for interpreting an author's meaning, in any phrase of doubtful im-

ence of their order; in other words, as the precept relates to the teaching and baptism of all nations, the promise coupled with it must extend down to the last teaching or conversion the world will ever behold. And as the Saviour had just before declared that *all power was given unto him both in heaven and in earth*, the passage plainly expresses *the age under the Mesiah*. The interpretation here proposed, is confirmed by a corresponding passage in this very evangelist—it is where our Saviour is giving instructions for the exercise of discipline in the church, and the concert of his ministers and people in prayer, which are to regulate their practice to the end of time. There we find this kind and encouraging promise which was evidently introduced with a view to the support and consolation of the church in the discharge of these great and awful duties—"For where two ort hree are gathered together in my name, *there am I in the midst of them.*" Matt, 18. 20. Christ's presence then in his church is to be perpetual, reaching down with it to the last hour of its existence on earth. But the question arises, how did he come? How is he present? In what way *is he with*, and *in the midst of his people*? Not in his bodily presence; for in that sense "the heavens must receive him till the restitution of all things." It is evidently in the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit which we have but just now seen identified with the coming of Christ in a special promise. The Spirit is to supply his presence to his disciples to the end of time; to be in them, *to dwell with them, and abide with them forever*. Hence it is said, that believers *are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in them.*

The perpetuity of the Spirit's presence in the church is what you admit, I know; but what is that presence? or how is he present in the Church?—You admit of no presence of the Spirit but in the way of inspiration and

port, is to observe in what sense he uses the same phrase elsewhere: governing ourselves by this rule we will find that Matthew always used the expression to denote the close of Christ's mediatorial reign on earth.—See Matt. 13. 39, 40, & 24. 3.—See also Parkhurst's Gr. Eng. Lex. on the word—John Pye Smith's Letters to Dr. Belsham. p. 109, 110.

miraculous gifts, or of written records. In the first sense he was present with the primitive church; in the last only he is present with us. The written word which is an expression of the will of the Spirit, is the Spirit present with the church—is the Spirit that abideth with us according to the promise. The written record in your scheme receives a kind of apotheosis; it is the spirit promised, it is invested with almighty power and agency; nay, superlative agency is ascribed to it, and as an efficient cause of a moral and spiritual change in the condition of man, it is chief in the universe.*.

But, sir, where do we find in scripture any representation of the Holy Spirit, such as you have made? Where do we see him stripped of personality, agency, and influence, and frittered down to a written record? Or where do we see the word of God, excellent as it is, cloathed with omnipotence, converted into an agent, and as to causal influence in a spiritual sense, allowed to tower above divinity itself? No where, I presume. These are but the paintings of theory. The language of inspiration is *the Spirit* and *the word*, yours is *the word of the Spirit*, or *the Spirit*.—That represents the Spirit as a supreme Almighty agent, and the word as a mean through which he operates on the mind in conversion; your theory asserts, on the contrary, the omnipotence of the word, and will not ascribe conversion to any other cause or agency

* I say *agency*, because the word is said to be the *cause of any conceivable operation* upon the mind of man, *to work in them with everlasting and almighty energy*, to be the only *species of power that can operate on intellectual creatures, and that begets all the faith in good and bad men*, &c. p. 12, 13, 14, 22. And in the citation last made it is said conversion is never ascribed to any other cause or agency than faith in the word, or that it is the effect of faith in the word. It is true he allows the spirit must be present when we believe, but from his statement afterwards it is plain that the spirit is just as present with the damned, in order to faith, as he is with the best saint or angel! For this very power *creates belief in the inhabitants of heaven, the hosts of hell, and in good and bad men in the world.* (p. 12. 13.) Good Heavens! and is this all the presence of the spirit for which we dare hope?

but to that of the word. Thus in the great lines of character, there is not the smallest resemblance between the one and the other. And there is just as little resemblance between it and the divinity of Westminster; for in that we see your almighty word degraded to a subordinate station. Yes, sir, the word of God which makes so capital a figure in your scheme, as even to lift its towering head above the throne of deity, and the glories of heaven, has been treated badly in that old book which you have vowed to admire, and to preach. It is there called an outward and ordinary mean, and deemed insufficient of itself to produce faith or repentance, without the power of the Spirit operating with it, to give it efficacy. And what is worst of all, in the most precious morsel of that divinity, the sum of saving knowledge, we see it placed on the same humble niche with sacraments, Kirk government and prayer. I wonder, sir, your indignation did not take fire at such uncourtly, irreverent conduct in these puritans. The presence of the Spirit, which the various promises of the old and new Testament contemplate, and which we are now considering, is not, nor can be the written word with all the worth and excellence it really possesses, and which I am always ready to attribute to it; but it is an agency or influence which makes truth efficacious to the conversion of sinners, and strengthens, supports, comforts, and sanctifies God's ministers and people in every age. From the promises we have seen, the Spirit is yet to be poured out more remarkably than he has ever been; and that too, for the great spiritual purpose of converting both Jews and Gentiles.

But if your plan be just not one of these rpomises can ever be accomplished. He was never given but to reveal truth and confirm it by miracle; and that done, he withdrew, leaving the word as his sole representative and agent in the church. How then can the spirit ever be poured out again? Never, if your views be correct—never, if the revelation of truth, and its confirmation by miracle, were the sole purposes for which the spirit was promised, or shed down upon men. But there were other purposes to be answered by his presence and agency in the church,

and upon the world; and this appears from the facts recorded in the New Testament, as well as from the uniform testimony of scripture. It is to this kind of evidence I would now beg your attention.

Besides bringing truth to the remembrance of the apostles, and the communication of miraculous powers, the Holy Ghost, it is certain, acted *immediately* or *directly* on the minds of men with a view to two other objects at least.* The one was the infusing warmth, vigour and boldness into the minds of the apostles, and other christians; thus enabling them to surmount the great and otherwise overwhelming difficulties which then pressed them, and especially inspiring such of them as preached the gospel with a vigorous activity and inextinguishable fervour in the execution of their office. The other was the putting forth an almighty energy with the word preached, to make it effectual for the conversion of sinners, and for the sanctification, strengthening and consolation of the church. The first of these is taught in many passages of scripture, among which the following deserve notice: "And when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*, and they *spake the word of God with boldness*: Whereunto [preaching the gospel] I also labour, striving according to *his working*, which *worketh in me mightily*—For he that *wrought effectually in Peter* to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same *was mighty in me* towards the Gentiles." It will also receive farther illustration in those facts and evidences with which I hope to be able to establish the second object proposed,

* *Immediate agency.*—By this is not intended that the Holy Spirit acts to the exclusion of means, as some appear to think; but the meaning is that in general such agency is *instant* and *present* with the means operating through them to the conversion and sanctification of the soul. It is in this sense only that the word is or can be called "the power of God unto salvation." Such agency, even when present with the means, and producing its effects through them, is as distinct from the means themselves as the hand of the artificer is from the instrument it uses; and we believe it to operate sometimes without means, and independent of them.

as embraced in the Spirit's operation, namely, the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints.

You, sir, were not insensible of the importance of scripture facts, and therefore refer to the conversion of the apostle Paul, the jailor, the twelve who had not so much as heard that there was a Holy Ghost, the three thousand, and the five thousand, as examples of the doctrines contained in the citations last made. And indeed, sir, if any one of these facts decided in favor of your ideas I would not for a moment oppose them. But which of all these conversions goes to prove that "conversion or sanctification never was ascribed to any other cause or agency than faith in the word?" Not one of them. Let us examine such of them as have any bearing on the question, for nothing is said either way with respect to the jailor's conversion that can be employed as proof, and as to the five thousand there is not a syllable uttered that respects the cause of conversion, much less is their conversion ascribed to faith in the word as its cause. It is simply said they heard the word and believed; and this is what no person disputes. The conversion of the three thousand is truly in point, and I am astonished at your reference to it. The scene of Pentecost was indeed wonderful, and for nothing more than for the boldness and intensely glowing zeal which was displayed in preaching the gospel by men who before this were timorous, hesitating and irresolute, and for the marked and visible success of the gospel, thus preached, on the minds of the stoutest enemies of the cross. But why this prodigious accession to christianity at this moment?—These very people had heard Christ preach, who spake as man never spake—they had witnessed miracles as stupendous as any that now took place, but they did not believe. Or why did not every succeeding sermon of Peter add the same number? You would say these converts believed because at that time they permitted the truth to enter into the view of the understanding, and that they and others did not believe at another time because they acted differently. Yes, sir, but why did they suffer the truth to enter into the view of the understanding at that particular time? Men are known to cling to old and

revered objects, and especially objects of a religious kind, with unyielding pertinacity; but here we see three thousand persons, in an instant renounce their former habits, and putting property, life, and every earthly prospect to hazzard, embrace a despised religion!—What a revolution! History records no parallel. The question has but one solution: The influence of the Holy Ghost fell immediately with the word preached by Peter on those persons who were converted. And this the apostle asserts in that very sermon which he then delivered. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the Heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes, thy footstool." Here we have unfolded the great principles of the œconomy of grace. We behold the risen Saviour "entered into Heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us."—We behold him "consecrated for evermore," invested with "an unchangeable priesthood after the order of Melchisedec," and perpetually employed in the intercessorial branch of his office. "Who is even at the right hand of God, who also *maketh intercession for us*.—Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*.—We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."* In consequence of his infinitely precious sacrifice for sin, and his appearing in the presence of God for sinners, as their advocate, he *receives of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost*, and *sheds forth what was seen*

* See Heb. 9. 24—6. 20—7. 24, 25; 28. Rom. 8. 34. 1 John 2. 1. The word paracletos in this last text, rendered advocate in our English Bible, has, it is thought, been improperly translated, and should have been represented by the word *monitor*, or *instructor*. That the word may have this rendering I readily admit, but it has more properly the one given by our translators. Parkhurst thus explains it; "*One who is called, or sent for, to assist another in a judicial proceeding—an advocate, a patron, one who pleads the cause of another.* In this view the word is applied to Christ, our *intercessor* who *pleads the cause of sinners* with his Father."

and heard on that ever to be remembered day. The same thing is expressed by the promise we are considering: "I will pray the Father and he shall send you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." But this is not all. We see him exalted a Prince and a Saviour, welcomed to the throne, and assured of triumph over his enemies. "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." We see "all power given unto him in heaven and in earth." And this very elevation of the Son of God, this his solemn enthronization as king of Zion, is connected with the descent of the Spirit on this great occasion. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, he hath shed forth this.* He himself is represented as pouring out the Spirit. As high priest and intercessor he prays the Father and he sends the comforter—as king of Zion, and one with the Father, "God over all blessed forever,"* he is very properly said to send the comforter. And such was his promise to his sorrowful followers in the last chapters of John: "But when the comforter is come *whom I will send unto you* from the Father, even the Spirit"—which is in substance the same promise with those already quoted—John 15. 26.

Now, sir, let us enquire from scripture what purposes were to be answered by his exaltation as intercessor and king with respect to our world. The apostle declares that it is from his unchangeable priesthood and his perpetual intercession that he is able *to save to the uttermost;* and he himself teaches us that in his glorification he received power to give eternal life to sinners: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that *he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*" John 17. 2. Again it is declared, "when he ascended up on high he led captivity captive and *gave gifts unto men*"—and what some of those gifts are (indeed all that we are concerned to know in this inquiry) the following passage will explain: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, *to give repentance to Israel,* and forgiveness of

* So Christ is styled Rom. 9. 5. He is also called God in several other passages of the New Testament, as John 1. 1. Acts 20. 28. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Heb. 1. 8. 1 John 5. 20.

sins." Acts 5. 31. His elevation, therefore, both as Priest and King, is for the express purpose of *saving to the uttermost, giving eternal life*, and *giving repentance to Israel.* Let us now turn to the scene of Pentecost and see three thousand souls of Israel receive the gift of repentance at the hand of their exalted Prince and Saviour: "Therefore he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Shed forth what? Not surely miraculous gifts only, as you would allege, but also the undaunted courage and the intensely glowing zeal with which Peter was endued to preach the gospel. This much at least was visible and astonishing to every beholder.

But, from the internal evidence of the passage itself, and scripture generally, I presume to add that he shed forth such a divine influence with the words which he enabled Peter to utter, as carried them powerfully and irresistibly to the hearts of the people, and wrought their conviction and repentance. Let me now recall the promise awhile ago quoted, which, though it especially respects the conversion of the Jews at some glorious period yet future, did receive a partial accomplishment in these first fruits of their conversion to christianity, and it will describe to you in the most convincing manner what it is he must have then, and will hereafter shed forth—"a spirit of grace and supplication"—a spirit giving grace, exciting the soul to prayer, and thus producing, what we might expect, faith and repentance, a looking on that Saviour whom they had pierced, and bitterly mourning.

How exactly is the affair of Pentecost the counterpart of this promise. That the triumphs of grace are intended to be represented by the apostle, is very plain from his quoting the 110th Psalm with application to the scene before him. The victories of the cross, the success of the gospel in the hearts of Christ's enemies, are there solemnly promised to a risen Redeemer, and the truth, the faithfulness of God pledged for the accomplishment of the promise: "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion.—Thy people shall be willing *in the day of thy power.*" Peter's sermon serves as a key to this passage, and teaches us to apply the events which then fell out

as instances of the accomplishment of these promises to Messiah. Then indeed it was that the Lord began to send the rod of his strength out of Zion. Then it was that he fulfilled his word to his son, making his people willing in the day of his power. Here, sir, is internal evidence, from the history itself, that the subjection and willingness of Messiah's enemies on this occasion was the effect of the power of the Spirit poured down upon the people at that time.

There is positive evidence to say that the Saviour was exalted to give repentance to Israel, and there is the same evidence to say that he gives it in every other case. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."* *If God peradventure will give*—no instruction or truth could otherwise effect it.

This passage decisively proves that repentance is the immediate gift of God, in distinction of instruction and truth, though both were to be used as means. Reasoning, therefore, from general as well as specific declarations, as to repentance being the gift of God, not mediately, as you suppose, but directly of his own power, I infer, as to this particular case of the conversion of these three thousand of the house of Israel, that repentance was given them by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost shed down by our ascended Lord and operating on their minds through Peter's ministry.

But the case of the twelve converts, who never so much as heard there was a Holy Ghost, must surely be favourable to your views. They at least must be truth-born.—You would not think so if you reflected. They had heard of the Holy Ghost. It was impossible they should not, having been converted under the ministry of John, who so often spoke of the Holy Ghost, and delivered the doctrine that Christ would baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire.† "These Ephesian disciples, therefore,

* 2 Tim. 2. 25.

† See Matt. 3. 11. Mark 1. 8. Luke 3. 16. John 1. 33.

could not be ignorant that there existed such a divine person as the Holy Ghost; but they say, *we have not heard*, ei pneuma hagion esti, *whether the Holy Ghost be*, that is *in action*, or *actually sent* upon the disciples of Christ. There is an exactly parallel expression, John 7. 39. Oupo gar en pneuma hagion. *For the Holy Ghost* was *not yet* given, (say our translators rightly) *because that Jesus was not yet glorified*. Ephesus being at a great distance from Jerusalem, these disciples had not heard of the *actual effusion* of the Holy Ghost on Christ's disciples, according to the Babtist's doctrine."* These converts, therefore, might have been, and no doubt were, the subjects of the regenerating influences of the Holy Ghost on their hearts, though they had not heard of nor received *him* in his miraculous or plenary effusion.

It is matter of just surprise to me, sir, that you should refer to the conversion of St. Paul to prove that the word is the cause of conversion. I have only to let the apostle state the matter himself to refute your hypothesis: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and *called me by his grace*, to reveal his son in me—Whereof I was made a minister, according to *the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power*."† And we have already seen him assign, as the cause of his own faith and of the whole Ephesian church, *the working of God's mighty power*.

You think that Lydia was converted, or at least believed, before she heard Paul preach the gospel; but the supposition cannot be admitted by any one who allows himself a moment's reflection on her story. That she worshipped God with a few Jews at Phillippi is all that is said as to her religion; but Saul, of Tarsus, and the Jews generally, worshipped God, and I leave you to determine how much real piety they possessed. No, sir, she was not converted till she heard the gospel, and then the agent effecting her conversion was neither Paul nor the gospel he

* Parkhurst on the word Pneuma.

† Gal. 1. 15, 16. Eph. 3. 7.

preached; though both had their instrumentality, but divine power—"*whose heart the Lord opened* that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." The case is positive as to the necessity of an immediate influence of Deity in order to conversion.

The apostle asserts that something more than the gospel, I mean the power of the Holy Ghost, operated to the production of a change of nature in the Thessalonian converts. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also *in power* and *in the Holy Ghost*."* And what confirms the idea that a divine power produced their faith, is, that we have already seen Paul thank God for it, and pray for its continuance.

Paul, speaking to Titus of the cause of conversion in themselves and others, says, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through our Lord Jesus Christ."† Here the influence of the Holy Ghost, which was efficacious to the renovation of heart in these christians, was something that God shed down abundantly through Jesus Christ. How striking the coincidence between the language of this passage and that of Luke in his history of the Spirit's effusion on the day of Pentecost!

The apostle thus addresses the Corinthian converts:—"Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with *the Spirit of the living God;* not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart:"‡ plainly intimating that the same divine hand which traced the characters of the divine law upon the tables of stone in Horeb was the agent in delineating the divine image in their souls.

In the same chapter he takes a melancholy survey of the Jews in his own time, as having a veil over their hearts in reading the Old Testament. They were blinded and the veil remained untaken away as to their hearts, though it was done away in Christ. He then delivers a blessed pro-

* 1 Thess. 1. 5. † Ch. 3. v. 5, 6.

‡ 2 Cor. 3. 3.

phesy of their ultimate conversion: "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." It is now almost eighteen centuries and still the vail is untaken away in reading the Old Testament—yes, and the New Testament too. The truth is in their hands, but they see not. And what shall rend the vail of prejudice from their hearts and open their eyes to the sublime doctrines of Moses and Jesus? Let the apostle tell you: "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." He will open their hearts as he did Lydia's, to attend to his blessed word. To their mournful condition he opposes his own and that of christians: "But we all with open [unvailed] face beholding as in a glass, i. e. in the gospel, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as *by the Spirit of the Lord.*" How clear, how convincing this passage!

Let me now adduce proof to shew that the Spirit was given to work other graces in the heart besides faith and repentance, during those joyful scenes which appeared at the first rise of christianity. Did christians then walk in the fear of God daily, finding comfort and rest? We read it was by the Holy Ghost. Did they abound in hope? It was by the power of the Holy Ghost. Was the love of God shed abroad in their hearts? It was by the Holy Ghost given unto them. Were they sorrowful yet always rejoicing? It was *by the word of truth, by the power of God*—not by the word alone. Could they, as sons of God, say Abba Father? It was because God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts."* Every grace, every comfort is ascribed to him, and these things shew us with how much propriety he is called the Comforter.

The same thing is declared where it is said—"Being confident of this very thing that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the ear-

* Acts 9. 31. Rom. 15. 13—5. 5. 2 Cor. 6. 7, 10. Gal. 4. 6.

nest of the Spirit.—Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.—And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."*

The apostle, having taken an humbling view of human weakness, has given our doctrine a very lucid and copious discussion in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, stating in the most direct and formal manner the presence and agency of the Spirit as the grand cause of life, activity, and comfort to the soul. He represents believers as *being in the Spirit*, and *having the Spirit*, and *the Spirit as dwelling in them, working in them a life of righteousness, quickening their mortal bodies*, and *enabling them to mortify the deeds of the body that they may live.* He also informs us that as "many as are led by the Spirit of God," and consequently none others, "are the sons of God"—that they "have not received a spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption," affiliating their hearts and strengthening them to "cry Abba Father"—that the Spirit beareth witness with their spirits that they are the children and heirs of God, giving them the first fruits of his power, the renewal of the divine image in their hearts, helping their infirmities, teaching them what they should pray for, and making intercession for them in groanings that cannot be uttered.

But what mean those solemn usages which have been, and still are observed in the church, the apostolic benediction which is pronounced at the close of every meeting, and the holy rite of baptism, by which we are consecrated to God? "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, amen." "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." These awful forms surely hold no doubtful or unintelligible language to the church, but bespeak most forcibly our need of the perpetual agency of the Holy Spirit to renew, sanctify and suc-

* Phil. 1. 6—2. 13. 2 Cor. 3. 5—5. 5—9. 8.

cour ts. The invocation of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost upon the baptized, while it affords an unanswerable proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, and forms a standing profession of it, announces to the world a solemn avowal that he needs the influences of the Holy Spirit to fit him for the glorious presence of God in heaven.

Thus, sir, with as much brevity as I could, I have laid before you the evidence which so copiously and variously determines the meaning of the Saviour's great promise respecting the descent of the comforter, as his representative in the church; and proving beyond a doubt, that other purposes were to be answered by his presence in the church, than revealing truth; and testing that revelation by miracle, namely, for rousing, animating and assisting the first ministry, and for giving energy to the word, making it quick, powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, and by it, working faith in the heart with repentance, love, joy, hope and peace: proving also, that his presence as a comforter is to be perpetual, and answer the same great designs of grace and consolation to the followers of Christ as long as the world stands. There is, therefore, absolute and various proof for the doctrine of efficacious grace, and of the falsihood of the position that conversion is wrought in the heart by the written word in its appropriate powers, and that it never was ascribed to any other agency or cause, than to faith in the word. Yes, sir, the proofs by which this doctrine is established are various, enlightened and strong.

The promises of the Father to the Son with respect to the triumphs of his cause and the extension of his kingdom, the promises made through him for the out-pouring of his spirit, and the conversion of both Jews and Gentiles; the unchangeable priesthood and intercession of Jesus Christ, his elevation and efficient reign, the promises of being with his disciples to the end of the world, of being in the midst of them, and of sending the comforter to abide with them for ever, the amazing change wrought in the character, the sentiments and conduct of the apostles, the numerous conversions related or alluded to in the New Testament, the many direct doctrinal declarations, the apostolic benediction and the baptismal rite, the thanksgiv-

ings and prayers of these first christians for this very thing, all conspire to prove efficacious grace. And on the contrary, I see nothing you have produced to disprove the doctrine, unless it be Rom. 1. 16. "For it [the gospel] is the power of God unto salvation;" and 1st Thess. 2. 13. "The word of God which effectually worketh in you that believe." The first of these texts does not forbid our ideas when viewed in its connection, and the last is really one of our strongest proofs; for in that, Paul thanks his God most heartily for their having received the word in the manner they did. And beside, let it be observed that the words, *which effectually worketh*, refer to God, not to the word, "God who effectually worketh in you that believe." The same remark applies to 1 Pet. 1. 23. "The word of God which liveth"—"The word of God who liveth and abideth for ever."*

You have, sir, been good enough to dictate a form of prayer for Calvinists, conceived on an overcharged, and at the same time defective representation of their doctrine, and one so blasphemous that you dare not venture to think they would ever adopt it. Allow me in turn to select a form of prayer for you; but one so pure, so just and so lofty that you cannot refuse to receive it, and I should hope, to admire it. The form is this:

"O Lord God, thou art very great; thou art clothed in honor and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens as a curtain. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: in judgment and verity hast thou done them all. Honor and majesty are before thee: strength and beauty are in thy sanctuary. Thou hast sent redemption unto thy people, thou hast commanded thy covenant forever: holy and reverend is thy name. O thou that hearest prayer unto thee shall all flesh come. Hear my prayer, O

* This rendering, which gives a more sublime sense, is certainly agreeable to the original, and entirly accords with the context; and as our translators, like most writers of their own age, often use *which* for *who*, it would be difficult to prove, that they did not design it should in both these texts, relate to *God*, the nearest antecedent.

Lord, Give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing—Without thee I can do nothing—O God be not far from me: O my God make haste for my help. Draw me and I shall run after thee. Turn thou me and I shall be turned—Heal me and I shall be healed—Save me and I shall be saved, for thou art my praise. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderous things out of thy law—Make me understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wonderous works. I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou wilt enlarge my heart. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, yea I shall observe it with my whole heart. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies and not unto covetousness. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake; for thy righteousness sake bring my soul out of trouble. The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from thee, O Lord. Now, O thou God of peace, that broughtest again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make me perfect in every good work, to do thy will, working in me that which is well pleasing in thy sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Here, sir, is a form of prayer from the best manuel in the world, and in making it the language of your heart at the throne of grace, you must abandon your system.

That sense of dependence and weakness, that ardent importunity for divine assistance and help, those pressing, urgent requests to the Supreme Being, for turning, drawing and healing; for upholding with his free spirit,

opening the eyes to see wonderous things in the law, enlarging the heart, teaching his way, giving understanding, *and inclining the heart* to his testimonies, for quickening, leading, comforting, and giving the preparations of the heart and the answer of the tongue; in a word, for perfecting the soul in every good work to do his will, working in it all that is well pleasing in his sight, conspire to evince the principle of efficacious grace. These prayers with those previously mentioned in the letter on faith, and unnumbered others which must strike you every where in scripture, all suppose the active interference of Deity, or his immediate influence with the written word, or means of grace to render them efficacious and fruitful in the heart.

From the quotations already made in my letter on regeneration you have seen, sir, that the doctrine of immediate agency is not new, as you have alleged. The pious and revered puritans from whom we have the honor of being descended, as well as the great body of Protestants, all contended for "a real internal efficiency, an immediate operation of the Spirit upon the heart and the will," (such is their language) accompanying the word in conversion and sanctification, in opposition to the Polonian Brethren, the Socinians, the followers of the imperious and haughty Laud and other errorists, who opposed and derided the doctrine. I shall not now produce (though I had intended it) any thing farther as proof against the imputation of novelty, but will ask liberty to quote a passage from the Westminster Confession of Faith, in which the doctrine is very plainly expressed. "Their [believers'] ability to do good works *is not at all of themselves*, but wholly from *the Spirit of Christ.* And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required *an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" Chap. 16. § 3. And permit me to add another from the Confession which was received as the symbol of fellowship by the Protestants of Scotland before the adoption of the Westminster Confession. "This our faith and assurance of the same, proceeds not from flesh and blood, that is to say, from no natural powers within us, but

is *the inspiration of the Holy Ghost*;* whom we confess God equal with the Father, and with his Son; who sanctifieth us, and *bringeth us into all verity, by his own operation*," Conf. artc. 12.

But I rejoice, sir, to think that this doctrine, though not novel, has been avowed by the great mass of Protestants down to this moment. Not by the weak, the uninformed and superstitious—not by miserable enthusiasts, or the lovers of mystical hypothesis, as you would have the world to think, but by numbers who have been of the first order of men both as to talents and mental accomplishments. Let me adorn my page with two or three names sacred to piety and fame.

That charming and accomplished man, Zollikoffer, the German orator, avows the doctrine in the most explicit manner. His discourse on spiritual experiences furnishes these remarks with reference to it: "Holy scripture informs us, that God frequently operates in a remarkable manner on the hearts of mankind, and by the methods of his providence puts them in such a frame that truth can display itself to them in its full force. This happens principally at the beginning of conversion. Then the spirit of the Lord, by his word, by certain favourable circumstances in which the person is placed, or in some other way unknown to us, removes the deep-rooted prejudices of the sinner against his service, and against true devotion, and thus takes away the impediments which had hitherto withheld him from the love of truth, and from obedience to it. We may comfort ourselves likewise in other important circumstances, which we cannot however accurately define, of the particular aid of the Supreme Being; and we may in general believe, that the Spirit of God will assist every sin-

* By *inspiration* these reformers did not intend, nor does the word necessarily mean the communication of new truths to the mind, but only that *instant* and *special agency* of the Spirit on the soul, by which it is enabled to believe savingly in Christ. This formal and direct agency of the Holy Spirit in conversion was uniformly called the *inspiration of grace* both in the private writings and canons of councils of the ancient church. See Owen on the Spirit, vol. 1. p. 356.

cere christian in a more extraordinary manner, whenever the ordinary means of salvation should not be sufficient to support his doubtful faith, or his conflicting virtue."*

But I mention with unusual pleasure the opinion of that amiable and truly christian prelate, the late Bishop of London. This great man, though the mitre blazed on his brow, was not ashamed of the plain and distinguishing, but to some revolting doctrines of our holy religion. Speaking of the assistance and consolation of the Holy Ghost, he says: "It is a circumstance of wonderful beauty and utility in the christian dispensation, that one of those three divine persons, who each bore their share in the great work of our redemption, condescends to contribute also to our present tranquillity; to abide with us here constantly upon earth; to assume the endearing name, and perform the truly benevolent office of a COMFORTER." And after taking the same precise view of the Saviour's promise as to sending the comforter, and its exact fulfilment in the first joyful events of the christian history, he proceeds to assert, that "in some degree *his sacred influence will still remain;* and to every one that is worthy of his consolations he will still be a comforter."† I will select also this passage from his lectures: "The few words which conclude the gospel of St. Matthew contain a promise full of consolation, not only to the apostles themselves, but to all the ministers of the gospel in every succeeding age. 'And, lo! says our blessed Lord, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' That is, although I am now about to leave you and ascend into heaven, and can no longer be personally present with you, yet the Holy Spirit, whom I have repeatedly promised to send unto you, shall certainly come to supply my place, shall constantly abide with you, and shall enlighten, guide, assist, support and comfort you to the end of the world."‡

The learned and judicious Paley bears his express testimony to the doctrine for which I am contending in several

* Tooke's Transl. vol. 1. p. 414, 415.

† Porteus's Sermons, p. 247—249. ‡P. 387.

discourses on that particular subject; from one of these the following passage is selected: "A change or improvement in thy religious state is necessary. The agency and help of the Spirit in working that change or promoting that improvement, are likewise necessary. 'Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' But according to what particular manner, or according to what rule, the Spirit acts, is as unknown to us as the causes are, which regulate the blowing of the wind, the most incalculable and unknown thing in the world. Its origin is unknown; its mode is unknown; but still it is known in its effects: and so it is with the Spirit. If the change have taken place; if the improvement be produced and be proceeding; if our religious affairs go on well, then have we ground for trust, that the enabling, assisting Spirit of God is with us; though we have no other knowledge or perception of the matter than what this affords."*

Dr. Buchanan, on his return from a mission to the East-Indies, and with a bosom touched into the glow of apostolic piety, delivered that admired sermon, the Star in the East. In this sermon he bears a decisive testimony to the doctrine we contend for, in these words: "For it seems there are some who have departed from the ancient principles of our reformation, who admit the *existence* of the Spirit of God, but deny his *influence*; who agree not with the apostle Paul, that the 'Gospel cometh to some in *word* only, and to others in *power*, and in *the Holy Ghost*, and in much assurance;' and who seem to forget what our Saviour hath said of the 'broad road,' and the 'narrow way.' Begin, then, the important enquiry; for 'the time is short,' and this question will be brought to issue before an assembled world. In the mean time I shall offer to you my testimony on this subject. The *operation of the grace of God*, in 'renewing a right spirit within us,' (Ps. li.) is a doctrine proposed by the whole faithful church of Christ militant here on earth. The great author of our religion hath himself delivered the doc-

* Sermons, p. 274.

trine in the most solemn manner to the world. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' '*Verily, verily*, it is an undoubted truth, an unchangeable principle of the heavenly dispensation, that except a man be *renewed in mind by the Spirit of God*, he shall not have power even to see or behold the kingdom of God."

In this solemn and spirited testimony you see it declared that the doctrine of the *influence of the Spirit of God*, of the *operation of the grace of God* in conversion, or in other words, of the gospel's coming *in power and in the Holy Ghost*, is the doctrine of our reformation, and of the whole faithful church of Christ militant, to the excluding all from a name or place in that church who deny it. Having stated that the doctrine was opposed in every country, whether learned or rude, he considers that opposition as a proof of "what he observes the apostle Paul hath taught," that "the cross of Christ is an offence" to the natural pride of the human heart; that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned." From which we see how much his views of the enmity of the human heart, and of the natural man of St. Paul, differ from those detailed in your pamphlet.*

* *Natural man.* The author would say that the natural man, is the "man who has no other knowledge than what he acquires from reason, independent of revelation." p. 66. This gloss is scarce worthy of notice. Let it however be observed, that if it be a just description of a natural man, to say that *he is one who has no other knowledge of divine things than what he acquires from reason independent of revelation*, then the opposite of this character is true, that is, *he who has more knowledge of divine truths than can be derived from reason independent of revelation* is a *spiritual man*. But who will assert this? The natural man, according to Jude, is one who has not the spirit, and separates himself from the truth. "These be they that separate themselves sensual" [Gr. psuchikoi natural] "having not the Spirit." The apostle James contrasts the spirit or wisdom of the world with that which is spiritual, and calls it sensual or natural. "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, *sensual* [Gr. psuchike natural] and devilish." It is then still true, that he who has not the Spirit cannot experimentally know divine things.

How pleasing to see sublimity and lustre of talents bowing lowly and even gladly at the shrine of truth, and paying unreserved homage to her most mysterious and most humbling dictates. Would to God, my dear sir, I could place your name on the same roll of honor, (I was going to say immortality) and with them call you blessed!

I shall not pause, sir, to discuss the questions concerning a preparatory work of the Spirit, or those new principles, dispositions and taste, said to be antecedent to faith, of which you often speak, because no party whatever, as far as I know, holds to these things in the view you have taken of them.* Nor yet will I occupy your time with a formal attention to the subject of physical operation or power, since the precise manner of both the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit is to us perfectly unknown and ineffable. All we can know or ought to say about the nature of that power by which the soul is created anew, is what the Spirit himself has already said for us, that it is the very power which *wrought in Christ when he rose from the dead*—the very same power which *shall change our vile bodies in the morning of the resurrection*, and by which our risen Saviour *is able to subdue all things unto himself*. I am not clear that the distinction taken with respect to the power of the Spirit into physical and moral, is either just or defensible. I observe the scripture makes no distinction whatever when the subject is mentioned; it is

* *No party holds them.* No, not even the Hopkinsians who seem to be viewed with a sentiment of peculiar disgust. They deny positively that regeneration consists in any such thing as a new taste, sense or principle. Emmons pointedly reprobates the idea as repugnant to truth, that "regeneration consists in implanting a new principle, taste or relish in the mind, which is the source of all the holy exercises of the subject of grace." See his Sermons, p, 266. Neither does Hopkins himself contend for any disposition, taste or sense as antecedent to faith. They hold that God works, and all good acts (faith and every other) instantly follow. Faith, love and good dispositions, are none of them antecedent, but simultaneous. But after all the ridicule which has been lavished on religious *taste*, there is clearly such a thing, though no person (as far as I know) believes it to be generation. See Job 6, 30. Ps. 119. 103. Sol. Song 2. 3. 1 Pet. 2. 3.

called his power or his word, whether it respect the creation of a soul or a world. He has but to speak, and the fact instantaneously takes place.* But I care not for names, if you will but allow me the things designed to be expressed by them. An immediate operation of the Spirit's own proper power and personal acting, is what I contend for in regeneration, and the whole progress of sanctification; and this granted, I feel little solicitude by what epithet it shall be designated, whether physical or moral, or both.

But for this, myself and others will be branded as enthusiasts—our ears will be stunned with the cry of inspiration, revelation, miracle—ah yes, and even innovation! Truce to this charge at least!—Yes, sir, you have done it. You attack us as though we believed in a revelation of new truths, and those too, different from what is contained in the written word.—You call upon us for miracles, prophecies, and the like appropriate tests of the operation of the Spirit within us: you demand our cre-

* Our author not only opposes the idea of physical operation, but considers it (and very unfairly too) as synonymous with force or violence. And yet he would have the world to believe that he ranks with the divines of the 17th Century. But his pretensions are as questionable in this instance as in all the rest; for these divines, while they abjure the idea of *coaction*, or compulsory influence, do nevertheless contend generally, for a physical as well as a moral operation of the Spirit in the work of regeneration. Such is the doctrine of Manton, Charnock, Goodwin, Flavel, &c. He thinks physical operation, it would seem, to be something very odious, and yet a physical operation lies at the very bottom of his scheme. It is the life-spring of his theory. Does truth by its own power save the sinner? No, he must act first—he must suffer truth to enter into the view of the mind, he must believe, and then, not before, does truth operate. There is then, intellectual digging or examining, reflecting, and enquiring, and the is believing (he should have added also, reading, hearing, and perceiving) all physical acts which become indispensibly necessary to salvation. So that did we even contend for a physical power and its operation as necessary to produce a change of heart; the question should not be, is physical power required? But whether that physical power shall be *human* or *divine*. This is the true state of the question.

dentials, otherwise you will be justifiable in denouncing us as enthusiasts—You hint that it may be a spirit of delusion and darkness, or at least a matter of opinion, imagination, or presumption, which we conceive to operate upon us—You ask for the sign of this antecedent and separate work of the Spirit, (as you call it) and would know whether it is "seeing, feeling, emotion, exercise, laughing, singing, dancing, jerking, or what else?" And lastly, as to religious taste, you exclaim, "Good God Almighty! Is the religion of Jesus become a mere pleasure of the imagination! a mere gewgaw, the plaything of an idle hour! the beguiler of tedious time! a mere rattle or a doll."† Who, sir, are those you deride? who are they that claim a revelation of new truths, or such as differ from what is recorded in the holy scripture? who set up pretensions to inspiration, other than a divine assistance in believing God's own work and doing our duty? or who did ever dream of that prefatory work of the Spirit? that antecedent separate work which has excited you so seriously, and provoked almost a volume of query and expostulation? If there really exist in our country some miserable beings who have the boldness and folly to affect such claims, they are to be pitied, not derided. Yet I question very much whether any class of people are so entirely lost to truth and propriety as to pretend to the whimsies and presumptions you allege. It is, however, but too plain from a connected view of what you have written, that these enthusiastic inspirations were designed to stick to the reputation of the Synod of Kentucky, and if so, I am fearless to pronounce it a calumny.—They never did hold nor preach any thing that would justify this heavy imputation.

But the trial of ridicule is not new. Lucian's sarcasm is accessible to every scholar, where, mimicing a christian, he exclaims, "Speak getting ability of speech by the Spirit."† And in this way the witty but profligate

• See p. 12, 20, 36, 59, 60, 70.

† Luc. Philopatici. Lege, para tou penumatos dunamin tou ogou labon.

Dean of St. Patrick's has signalized himself, by exposing to ridicule every pretension to the influences of the Spirit, in the Tale of the Tub, and the Discourse concerning the mechanical operation of the Spirit. In these wanton, and in many instances, nauseating pieces of humour, the extravagancies of enthusiasm, the distractions and phrenzies of false religion are amply exposed. This perhaps might have done. But all divine influence, all sentiment in religion is exposed too, in the licentious revelry of the author's sarcasm.

Miserable man, he laugh's through life; sometimes riots in a coarse and nauseous buffoonery, and then closes his days, a shocking spectacle of fatuity and desertion. I would not inherit his fame at the price of his innocence and reason.

I regret, my dear sir, to see you without discriminating the warm and devoted exercises of real piety, from the affected inspirations of fanaticism, aim the shaft of ridicule at every thing in the form of divine operation and its warm results. No, you never discriminate—you never have compassion, on some making a difference; but maul unmercifully those who believe in immediate agency, experience of grace, spiritual taste, emotion, and feeling in religion; and ludicrously couple these things with laughing, dancing and jerking.

Do you really intend to render true religion ridiculous by stringing it up with its counterfeits and incidental concomitants? or would you strike through the feelings and reputation of your brethren, with those overcharged paintings of an ill conducted revival, which you insinuate has been perverted and abused by their unfortunate theology? But, sir, allow it true; still you dishonor yourself as well as injure others by the style in which you assail us. You depart from the rules of propriety, you violate the most venerable claims of your standing, in descending to raillery and sarcasm, on the awful subject of religion. To pity the frailties and foibles of weak fallible creatures, yes, and these your brethren; to touch lightly and gently their errors, would have been the dictate of a divine charity. If we are wrong, set us right, in a manner which

becomes the sanctity of your character and the mild genius of your religion; represent our errors fairly, address our reason convince our judgment—but spare, O spare our involuntary weaknesses, cover our deformity from the evil eye of censure—and aid not the unhallowed triumphs of those that say, "aha, aha."

The Synod of Kentucky never did excite, never did solicit corporeal agitation in religion. They sought no novelties, but adhered to the creed of their fathers in its simple expression. They never taught a doctrine that would tend to awaken these motions of body or mind, which foster pride or foment a divisive spirit. But, sir, those unhappy young men whose minds had been seduced from the humbling doctrines of the Confession by an instrumentality not unknown to you, stirred up division, preached the very heresy of your book, disclaimed creeds, confessions and all religious order, pushed on corporeal as well as mental excitement to its extreme limit, and hurried on (O how grievously we should pity them!) without reflection, without pause, without apprehension, to a state, of afflicting anarchy. There was indeed a sad inversion of things; schism, distraction, and delusion ensued. The party generally moved on the Socinian heresy, and a considerable division of them have fallen into the meshes of a hideous fanaticism, which by denying the doctrine of Christ's resurrection, removes the angular stone of the christian fabric, and urges its total overthrow. True enough, sir, it was a moment of humiliation to the church; when her foes predicted her destruction, and exclaimed, "Ah, so would we have it!" And would you charge all this to the Synod, who by doctrine, reproof and discipline, raised up a barrier against the desolating inroad of these threatening evils?—Often did we warn the people not to make feeling the test of truth, nor yield themselves to sentiment as the safest guide—not to surrender their minds to the tempest of passion, nor imagine violent sensual emotions to constitute the fervour of genuine religion; not to substitute a rapid movement of the blood for the sedate operations of reason; assuring them that things of this kind would lead directly to a deplorable and ruinous

fanaticism. All this we did. Let our sermons, our exhortations, our private writings, and our synodical addresses witness for us—and witness they will, if not now, at the judgment of the great day! And yet after all, you charge the guilt of these phrensies and errors home upon us—you recognize the cause of all this mischief in the doctrines we preach—nay, more, you sneer at our mystical regeneration, link up our antecedent work of the Spirit (and indeed all religious emotion) with laughing, dancing and jerks; and, with an invocation of the Deity too, throw religious taste into the same group with gewgaws, dolls and rattles. Oh how cruel is this! how unjust! But did we even merit such treatment, how unfit, how misplaced, how much out of character are these attempts at raillery. Is this the place for a display of humour, for dazzling corruscations of wit, and for the ludicrous in painting. The subject is too awful for satire. Or were you the man to have done it? A man, I will say, whom age and the consecration of office should have made venerable—a man whom philosophy should have rendered liberal, and christianity moulded to sweetness and gentleness—a man too who professes to snatch truth from the rubbish of mystical hypothesis, purge our eyes from the film of error, and shed a flood of light upon our darkness—in a word, a man who would instruct and reform us. Was it for such a man to resort to the powers of ridicule? Have we no right to complain?—You will judge.

The attempt however is fruitless. The Shaftsburian trial of opinion will be lost on us. We must be reached through our judgment or not at all. A stroke of wit will never make us yield a point of doctrine. And while we stand firm to our creed and our vows, we have this to console us, that we not only represent, in opinion, that galaxy of merit and talents which adorned the 17th century, but share with them the very same obloquy, reproach and insult, which they felt in their day. Yes, read the writers of that period, and especially Dr. Owen on the Spirit, and you will find that our divinity is not the flash of the day, and that the avowal of this very divinity,

subjected those illustrious men to the outcry of inspirations, enthusiastic raptures, visions, revelation, mystery and miracle.

Besides, sir, will you venture to affirm, that those poor creatures who are the subjects of corporeal agitations, and who have so unfortunately provoked your irony, have not, nor can have any religion? Are they necessarily damned, because certain movements of the animal fibre, have become associated with a particular train of thought or mental feeling? Is piety never allied to trembling sensibility, to extreme delicacy of nerves? Before you censure things of this nature indiscriminately, it might be well enough to attend to certain facts recorded in scripture. Abraham's falling to the earth at one interview with his God, and his laughing at another; Daniel's fainting and sickness; Habakkuk's tremor and strong agitations of body; Saul's sinking to the ground under conviction, and the Apostle John's falling down as a dead man, are interesting examples of bodily affection, under strong mental emotion. Whatever you may think, I have no difficulty to believe that some of the best people our earth ever saw, have had such views of God and divine things, as were overpowering to weak humanity, and productive of very sensible effects on the animal frame. As you are fond of conformity to the Reformation, in doctrine and practice, be so then, and let its history shew you some strong examples of this kind; and suffer me to recommend to your notice, three very extraordinary instances of bodily impression from enlarged views of spiritual objects which are related of Mr. Giles a godly martyr, and of those great and worthy men, Flavel and Howe.*

These corporeal changes are not religion, but its casual associates only under certain circumstances, and a peculiar organization of fibre.

While I would not invite corporeal change, nor vindicate half the appearances of it which have taken place in

* Flavel's works (folio) vol. 1. p. 547, compared with his Life. And Calamey's Life of Howe in the 1st vol. of his works, p. 75.

the country; yet I would not touch them with any but a gentle hand; and for a world I would not pass an unqualified censure upon them.

There is nothing wanting to restrain the extravagancies to which motions of this description may be carried, but gentle admonition and circumspect government in the clergy, and the prevalence of sound principles in religion. Some persons are so much afraid of enthusiasm, that they never get religion.

> "What is fanatic phrenzy, scorn'd so much,
> And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
> I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear,
> That fire is catching if you draw too near,
> But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
> And give true piety that odious name."
>
> COWPER.

Allied to the sbuject which I am examining, is your proscription of the passions from religion. In other things we are allowed to be men, but in religion we are to be *intellect* only. You tell us p. 72, that "religion in its principles, its operations, and enjoyments, is purely intellectual," You never speak of passions but in a bad sense, and never allow religion to have any thing to do with them, but to govern them. You isolate the understanding of man, and make it the sole recipient of religious impression or action. It is the sanctum sanctorum of man—the consecrated department of his nature, in which Deity and the virtues are at home. But, sir, in the name of philosophy let me ask, how you are to exclude the passions from a participation in religious concerns? Is it possible for the understanding to grasp the great, the awful, the tender subjects of the scriptures, and our very intimate concern, our affecting interest in them, and the passions not be excited? No, never—Our passions must awaken—they must, they will correspondwith the objects of contemplation. When we contemplate objects of a spiritual nature, the passions of the soul are roused into action, and even the body becomes sensible of their operation and effects. Such is our constitution. Your

scheme of religion cannot be realized among such beings as men are, if they reflect at all. To exile the passions from religion is the same thing as to drive it from the earth. Exile what? Admiration, astonishment, veneration, love, zeal, ardour, joy with tranquillity, desire, sadness, compassion, horror, hatred, jealousy, and aversion.—Banish these as they respect their appropriate objects, and you are done with religion. Before you write again, take a lesson from Watts, Cogan and Le Brun, on the doctrine of the passions. It was the opinion of St. Paul, that religion has some concern with the whole of our nature; yes, sir, and he prays God to exert an active influence for its universal sanctification. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5. 23. You may see, sir, in this scripture the idea refuted, that sanctification is never ascribed to any other agency but to faith in the word. Here the agency of Deity is invoked with reference to sanctification, and that as extending to the whole constitution of humanity. Religion is as wide as our nature—man is its object; and any thing less than himself can never be a guiltless offering at the altar of his Maker.

Think of the many affecting passages of inspiration, which are but the language of elevated passion. "Love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave—Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love—As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee—My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." How cold, how inanimate is your intellectual piety compared with the warmth and vehemence expressed in these scriptures. That direction of self, that out-going of soul, that palpitating ardour of desire, that sickness of heart which they describe, has but little resemblance to the lifeless apathy, the frigid sedateness of intellectual operation. On this subject let me address to you the animated remonstrance of a man, whose piety was ardent, and his song seraphic.

Ye Quietists in homage to the skies!
Serene! of soft address! who mildly make
An unobtrusive tender of your hearts,
Abhorring violence! who *halt* indeed
But for the blessing, *wrestle* not with heav'n!
Think you my song too turbulent? too warm?
Are *passions*, then, the Pagans of the soul?
Reason alone *baptis'd*? alone *ordain'd*
To touch things sacred? O for warmer still!
Guilt chills my zeal, and age benumbs my powers:
Oh for an humbler heart and prouder song."

YOUNG.

Before I conclude this letter, let me meet more directly the charge which is so often made against Calvinism, as tending to excite and propagate enthusiasm. This charge has been, and still is extremely common. Yet never was accusation less agreeable to fact. The doctrines of that system are directly calculated to impress on its votaries a deep sense of their weakness and dependence, to humble their pride, and subject every aspiring thought to the supreme will, to excite adoring apprehensions of God, and the infinite condescensions of his grace, in a word, to place him on the throne and prostrate the universe at his footstool.

It is not likely that such opinions should have an ill effect on persons holding them, and especially could not produce a spirit of enthusiasm, which is uniformly the result of pride and vanity of spirit; and I think it is found, in fact, that it never has perhaps in one instance had a tendency of this kind. As far as my observation extends I have never known a single Calvinist, much more a large proportion of persons so denominated, chargeable with a fanatic licentious spirit. Before any one became the subject of unnatural fervour and romantic feeling, he had always first changed his creed. I have never known a sensual frantic zealot to retain Calvanistic opinions. Nor do I believe that history records any thing that should be charged to Calvinism on the score of intemperance and riot in religion. But if we regard fact, if we turn over the page of history, we will be amply informed that the most grossly enthusiastic sects have been Armini-

an, Pelagian, or something else than Calvinists; such were the Quakers, the Ranters, the Mystics, the Swedenborgers and Shakers. In this country, and in our own times, those who have been remarkable for enthusiastic violence, and exravagant emotion, in the religious way, are never Calvinists, but something else. New Lights, Arian Baptists, Halcyons and Shakers, all conspire to detest and execrate Calvinism. Whenever bodily agitations have appeared among Calvinists, they never have eventuated badly: they always have been kept within the limits of decency, and chastised to temperance by the humbling spirit of their doctrines.

In the bounds of the Pittsburg Synod, the same corporeal changes took place, which appeared in this part of the country, but there were accompanying them no extravagancies, no rant, no distraction, no schisms. And why? It was their doctrine and their discipline—it was Calvinism, which under God was the mean of preventing the introduction of the same scene of riot and insanity which we have witnessed among ourselves. Let the charge if disseminating mischief come home to those who have been industrious to propagate opinions hostile to sound principles and sobriety of mind. But on this subject I am able to repel the charge of enthusiasm and riot, by producing the avowed judgment of those who were not Calvinists, and consequently cannot be deemed partial in the representation they give of its practical tendency. Mr. Forsyth, who is eminent, both as a civilian and a man of letters, says, "whatever may be thought of the practical tendency of the two opinions (the Arminian and Calvinistic) there is one remark which we think ourselves bound in justice to make, although it appears to us to be somewhat singular—It is this: that from the earliest ages down to our own days, if we consider the character of the ancient Stoics, the Jewish Essenes, the modern Calvinists, and Jansenists, when compared with that of their antagonists the Epicureans, the Saducees, the Arminians, and Jesuits, we shall find that they have excelled in no

* Encyclop. American. Vol. 13. p. 479.

small degree in the practice of the most rigid and respectable virtues, and have been the highest honor of their own ages, and the best models for imitation to every age succeeding. At the same time it must be confessed that their virtues have in general been rendered unamiable by a tinge of gloomy and severe austerity."*

Bishop Burnet who was partially an Arminian, but a very moderate and amiable prelate, thus expresses himself with respect to the practical influence of Calvinism. "A Calvinist is taught by his opinions to think meanly of himself, and to ascribe the honor of all to God: which lays in him a deep foundation for humility: he is also much inclined to secret prayer, and to a fixed dependence on God: which naturally both brings his mind to a good state, and fixes it in it. And so though perhaps he cannot give a coherent account of the grounds of his watchfulness and care of himself, yet that temper arises out of his humility and his earnestness in prayer."*

With judgments so respectable as these in our favour, I shall at least, if I can do no more, console myself under the obloquy of persons less liberal, less informed, or less pious, while I adhere with a sincere devotion of heart to that system of doctrine usually styled Calvinistic.

I am, sir,

With a sentiment of sincere friendship,

Yours, &c.

* Exp. of the 39th Article, p. 166.

LETTER V.

THE COTTAGE, JUNE 6, 1810.

DEAR SIR,

I MUST once more request your attention while I undertake a very concise review of what you deliver on the subject of necessity as attached to the divine decree, and that inability which belongs to man in an unregenerate state. You appear to mistake the opinions of Dr. Edwards and other Calvinists on these subjects. The view you have taken of them is really a false and distorted one; and coming as it does from one in the bosom of the church, a man of age and eminence, I cannot help thinking peculiarly unfortunate. The world must be shocked to think that Dr. Edwards and other divines of the last century, should have entertained or published opinions so offensive as those alleged in your pamphlet; nor will their wonder or indignation be in the least intermitted to be informed that Dr. Miller and many of our clergy, (becoming necessarians in principle) have gone into the same defection from the reformed doctrine.

You say, "Mr. Miller, in his retrospect of the eighteenth century, and his friend in the additional notes, have enlisted themselves with Dr. Edwards on the side of moral necessity, in the famous question of liberty and necessity, and of course on the side of immediate operation of the Spirit in regeneration." And after representing the doctrine of moral necessity as affecting the morality and responsibility of man, nay, as reducing man to a mere to machine, you remark, "It does not change the ground to say that we are intelligent creatures, for that intelligence has no power of spontaneous action but the mere capacity of being dragged at the wheel of necessity, passively, and without the least power of resisting. Every volition or intellectual action independent of any spontaneous power of action or re-action, must necessarily be what it is. The

praise or blame, therefore, rests upon the head of him who made it what it is, and not on him who could not alter it. The two great deistical patrons of necessity, Hume and Godwin, seem to me more consistent in rejecting revelation than Edwards, Priestley and Miller in embracing it. Mr. Miller is certainly mistaken in representing the Calvinistic divines as adhering to a doctrine of predestination which implied necessity, as it is held by Dr. Edwards." p. 73. 74.*

You are not singular, sir, in these remarks. Some writer in the Anti-Jacobin Review, animadverting on certain passages deemed exceptionable in Dr. Hawies' Church History, has this observation; "It is obvious to *every man acquainted with* the subject, that Edwards reasons as a *philosophical necessarian* of the same school with Hobbes and Priestley, and not as a predestinarian in the school of Calvin."†

To all such representations, coming from whom they may, I rejoin, that they are illiberal and unjust. It is not true, that Edwards, Miller, or other intelligent Calvinists, have taken the side of *philosophical necessity*, as taught by Hobbes, Hume and Godwin. The necessity of such writers is identified with materialism and infidelity, not with Calvinism, as explained in the school of Edwards; and though Priestly and some others have attempted to graft this necessity with its kindred materialism, upon a christian stock, and give it a new name of baptism, it is really atheism still, and deserves unqualified reprobation. What doctrine of christianity does Priestley retain, unless it be the resurrection, and that not in the sense of scripture,

* Mr. Craighead does not indeed in this place accuse the Synod of Kentucky with the supposed errors of Edwards and Miller, but he charges Edwards and Hopkins with corrupting the reformed doctrines, and believes (as I understand him,) that we have pretty generally embraced their views of theology; and he often speaks of modern investigators, modern refinements &c. with reference to his brethren.

† Skinner's Primitive Truth and Order. p. 362.

as being the resurrection of the body only, but the resurrection of the body and soul both, which, according to him, were material and suffered death. To tag such a scheme with some shreds of christianity, is one of those monstrous anomalies in the moral world, which must always shock sober incorrupt reason, and never can be pleasing to any but those who will have nothing to do with the doctrines of Christ, until they shall have lost every native feature in the stye of Leucippus and Epicurus. Materialism christianised is just as great an insult upon reason, as a material theism. Neither one nor the other can be received by a man who thinks at all; for if mind be the result of organic structure, how shall we conceive of an intelligent first cause that is not material, and if material how can such cause be God?

On the principle of mind being matter, who could fail to adopt the gross and blasphemous language of Hobbes, "We worms cannot conceive how God can understand without brains." The attempt to amalgamate the doctrines of Christ with those of materialism, was a wretched experiment of Priestley. It would have been infinitely better for himself, and fortunate for the world, had his pursuits as an experimentor, been confined to phlogiston and the gasses. He could manage with greater adroitness, a matress or chemical tub, than the New Testament or Walton's Polyglot. The doctrines of materialism, philosophical necessity, and Socinianism, are intimately connected as parts of the same system, and are no more like the necessity of Dr. Edwards, or the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, than they are like any thing else.* Whatever may be thought of it by you, sir, or the gentleman in the review, I maintain there is a clear and obvious distinction between the two schemes, as any person may perceive who penetrates at all below the surface of things. Dr. Edwards advocates a scheme which he calls *moral necessity*, but he accurately defines its meaning *and application* to the moral powers of man, distinguishes it from *natural necessity*, and from fatality,

* See Buck's Theological Dictionary, on the word Materialist.

shews that it does not make men machines, but is perfectly consistent with the use of means and endeavours, and denies that it makes God the author of sin, or has any tendency to atheism and licentiousness. His immortal inquiry into the freedom of the will, a work that never has been answered, and which, as I believe, is clearly unanswerable, is of itself a complete refutation of all such charges as that which we are considering, as well as of the whole argument you have attempted in opposition to it. But in some remarks which he has made on an author who had, like Godwin, made an improper use of what he had written on the freedom of the will, and maintained such a necessity as was inconsistent with liberty, he in the most formal manner disclaims philosophical necessity, and enters a most solemn protest against that author's abuse of his doctrine, refuting at the same time his opinions, in a series of masterly arguments.

It is there he vindicates himself in terms like these: "I have abundantly expressed it as my mind, that man, in his moral actions, has true liberty; and that the moral necessity, which universally takes place, is not in the least inconsistent with any thing that is properly called liberty, and with the utmost liberty that can be desired, or that can possibly exist or be conceived of." And again, "I have largely declared, that the connexion between antecedent things and consequent ones, which takes place with regard to the acts of men's wills, which is called moral necessity, is called by the name of *necessity* improperly; and that all such terms as *must*, *cannot*, *impossible*, *unable*, *irresistible*, *unavoidable*, *invincible*, &c. when applied here, are not applied in their proper signification, and are either used nonsensically, and with perfect insignificance, or in a sense quite diverse from their original, and proper meaning, and their use in common speech; and, that such a necessity as attends the acts of men's wills, is more properly called *certainty*, than *necessity*; it being no other than the certain connexion between the subject and predicate of the proposition which affirms their existence."* Thus, sir,

* Edwards's Works, vol. 5. p. 335, 339.

we see with how much propriety it has been said that Dr. Edwards was a *necessarian*, taking his cue from Thomas Hobbes, rather than reasoning as a *predestinarian* in the school of John Calvin. Had you ever read Hume or Godwin on liberty and necessity, and instituted a comparison between them and Edwards, on the Freedom of Will, you would have seen many points of difference; but *especially*, you would discover that while these writers (like yourself) confound *moral* with *natural* necessity, he very fully discriminates the one from the other; and, that while they consider liberty like chance, a mere hypothetical thing, a negative power, that has no where in nature a real existence, he contends for the liberty of man in the fullest, the most extensive sense, making it the very soul of his system, and proving incontestibly, that there is in reality no freedom for man on the Arminian and Pelagian hypothesis. And let it be recollected that these same abortive exclamations of Hobbes' necessity, making men machines, and other terrible things, being made in the author's day, were treated by him as they deserved.* It would be well, sir, if you would examine with some degree of care, the doctrines of an author, and do something more than resort to the fallible reports of memory, when you attempt their exhibition or refutation, before the world. To disturb the repose of mankind, and sew the seeds of distrust in the public mind with respect to authors, their works, or living characters, who receive their opinions by frightful and even unjust representations of what they have taught or believe, is cruel, disingenuous, and, I was going to say, intolerable. In this style of exhibition, I am sorry to say, you appear but too much to excel.

No, sir, neither the celebrated Edwards, Dr. Miller and his friend, nor any section of the Presbyterian church in the United States are at all chargeable with the necessity of Hume or Godwin—and let who will say they are, I shall not hesitate to pronounce it misrepresentation and calumny. There is, however, this apology for the opposers of Calvinism: they never dare venture to attack it

* See Edwards's Works, vol. 5. p. 258, 259, 323.

in its simple, unsophisticated form, and consequently are compelled to resort to false colouring before they commence the onset.

But permit me, sir, to ask you why this sturdy opposition to the doctrine of motives? this determined hostility to necessity? Have you forgot that you yourself have taught it—that it forms one of the strongest features of your system? That it does, I shall now undertake to prove. It is your manner to speak of divine truth as operating on the mind "with everlasting and almighty energy," as imposing, "almighty restraints on the passions," and as being, "the highest, most coercive and irresistible cause of believing in the universe." And you tell us too, that when truth has entered fully into the view of the understanding, no man can resist it. "Neither disposition, nor motives have the least effect."* This cause or agent, call it what you please, "works with almighty, nay, an everlasting energy", and with a power superior to, and more irresistible than that of God himself, it moves on to its effect with inevitable certainty; it coerces belief in despite of will, motives, or any countervailing agency whatever. The cause is not only almighty, but even more than that, and the effect which is faith is precisely and infallibly determined by the energy of the cause—a dependent, involuntary, coerced, unavoidable act. It is thus, sir, that you teach us necessity, a stern, an everlasting necessity, which overtops every being in the universe, and like the fate of fabulous theology, is superior to the Gods. Where then is liberty? You will inform us. In p. 46 you decide against the principle in positive terms; for you say, "to be free and under the constraint of Almighty power at the same time, is just as much the object of power, as to be and not to be at the same time." Now as the word of God *constrains belief* and acts with *Almighty* power, nay, with a power that is *coercive*, *irresistible* and *supreme* in the universe, it is plain from your principles, there can be no liberty.

* See p. 14. 26. 38.

Perhaps you will answer, that the omnipotence or supremacy which you represent as the attribute of truth, is moral in its nature, and cannot infringe the freedom of man. I reply, that you derive no other advantage from the remark, than that the necessity of your scheme is a *moral necessity*, and in that case you will symbolize with Edwards in this famous question, and incur an obligation to defend his theory against the objections with which it is assailed. I should indeed hope that you might be led to take this precise view of your doctrines, and admitting it to yield to the opinions of Edwards; for in sober truth, I can see no greater difficulty in believing a moral necessity arising from, or connected with the operation of almighty power, as exercised by an all-wise and benevolent being, and that moral necessity which attends the operation of almighty power as connected with the word. On the supposition that omnipotence can be an attribute of the word of God (which indeed I am far from allowing) and that it operates irresistibly on the mind to produce its effects, it will be evident, that equal violence must be done to the will, as if an immediate agency of deity had been employed in their production.

We have seen that yours is a scheme of necessity, as far as it respects the exercise of faith and the subjection of the passions; let us now enquire whether it is equally so with respect to the determination of the *will*; and here you leave us no room to doubt—your language is positive: "The belief of these fundamental gospel principles constitutes the principles of the new nature, and imposes upon the heart a necessary choice of the grace and salvation offered in the gospel as the greatest good." Here there is no ambiguity to allege. You say in so many words, that *the belief* of gospel principles imposes on the heart a NECESSARY CHOICE; and you sometimes speak of faith, as that which works in the person "with divine energy, divorces the heart from sin, and reconciles it to the obedience of the law with all the force of moral omnipotence:" and besides this, we hear you declare, that "conversion or sanctification never was ascribed to any other cause or

agency but to faith in the word."* It is not wonderful then, that faith which acts with *divine energy*, with the *force of moral omnipotence*, should impose a necessary choice on the heart, and generate every branch of conversion and holiness. Almighty truth, the supreme cause, coerces faith; and omnipotent faith working with divine energy imposes a necessary choice, and is the very agency to which conversion and sanctification is to be ascribed. Such, sir, is your order, such the necessity it involves. And I shall not object to your calling it a moral necessity. But indeed, you have not left even this door open, for such is your ardor for victory in assailing Edwards that you will admit no distinction between natural and moral necessity, sternly urging this grand objection.—"It does not change the ground to say that we are intelligent creatures, for that intelligence has no power of spontaneous action but the mere capacity of being dragged at the wheel of necessity, passively and without the least power of resisting. Every volition or intellectual action must necessarily be what it is."—All this comes home with emphasis to your own scheme—Faith is a dependant, involuntary act, produced by a coercive irresistible cause—and that faith imposes a necessary choice, converts and sanctifies—Where then is the power of spontaneous action?—Not in your theory surely. Every volition or intellectual motion is the necessary result of an irresistible cause. From the moment that omnipotent truth comes into contact with the mind, all spontaneous action is lost, and resistance absolutely impossible—every act whether faith, volition or any thing else belonging to conversion or sanctification is necessarily what it is. The mind is allowed to possess nothing more than a "mere capacity of being dragged at the wheel of necessity, passively and without the least power of resisting." Thus, according to your principles there is no liberty—there can be neither praise or virtue supposable in such a state of things.

These remarks clearly show that you admit the doctrine of necessity in the strongest views of it. Your motives, your causes, your agencies are omnipotent, and they march

* See p. 2, 21, 36.

on to their objects or effects with a necessary and resistless certainty. Nor is it implied only. You receive it in express terms as will appear in the following citations. "I will indeed admit that infinite motives have a moral omnipotence when they dwell fairly in the view of the mind"—"All moral attraction consists in motives. And I if I be lifted up from the earth, said our Lord, will draw all men unto me. He had no attractives on the cross but what appeared by the truths he illustrated and confirmed, the justice, the mercy, and the faithfulness of God."*

All moral attraction consists in motives, these motives are the truths Christ illustrated or confirmed on the cross, and being infinite in their nature, they have a moral omnipotence on the mind to excite and determine its motions, and controul its changes through conversion and eventual sanctification. There is then no liberty for the sinner from the very moment he surrenders his understanding to the omnipotence of truth. While a careless, secure, distracted mortal, he had something like freedom; but no sooner does he yield himself to the dominion of infinite motives than the case is entirely altered. He has then performed his last free act—He is ever afterwards in all his mental operations actuated by a necessary force, and every effect that takes place in the mind is so precisely determined by the energy of the cause producing it, that it was impossible any other effect under such circumstances, and under the operation of that particular cause, could have happened at all but the one that does happen. No, he is no more free—he has surrendered himself to the operation of a supreme, coercive, irresistible cause that controuls, directs and determines every motion or change of his soul ever afterwards; for its energy is not only almighty but everlasting. Yes, he is the slave of necessity—call it a moral, a good, or a divine necessity if you please—still it is necessity, and on your principles there cannot be freedom.

This, I think, is the deduction I should make from the following remarks: "Were the government of the human will the object of physical power, or of irresistible con-

* See p. 92, 27.

straints, there would have been as few aberrations in the moral as in the natural world"—"Nay, if the human will *was* capable of physical or coercive government, man in sinning must have done just what God designed he should"—"If God directly or indirectly governed the will then or now," (that is, before the fall or since) "to make every act just what it is, every declaration of general goodness and mercy is contradicted by every sin committed."* The idea expressed by these passages is, that if the Supreme Being does or ever did, directly or indirectly, lay irresistible constraints on the human will, or exercise coercive government over it, then the actions of man in violating his law, being necessary, could not have been criminal, and allowing this to be true, the converse of the proposition will also be true, that, if God directly or indirectly exercises *coercive government*, over the human will, the actions of man done in obedience to the divine law, being equally necessary, cannot be virtuous or praiseworthy. And you know, sir, you have said that God does indirectly govern men, (he does it by means,) laying them under almighty restraints—seizing their minds by a force that is superlative, coercive and irresistible to effect belief, and impose a necessary choice upon the heart; and this being the case, there is not, nor can be liberty. It is a name without power or existence any where in nature.

Thus it is, sir, that your theory overthrows liberty, by establishing a resistless, irreversible and eternal necessity. And while you impugn, I ought rather to say misrepresent, Edwards as the advocate of necessarian principles, you have by a curious fatality in things become in fact their advocate yourself.

From this examination too, it is observable, how injuriously you have coupled our Edwards and Miller, with Hume and Godwin in the way of imputation, when it is true that your own scheme is really more entirely necessarian than theirs, and that this is the case would not be difficult to show by a comparison of what you have

* See p. 47, 48.

written with the dogmas of these philosophers. From the liberty you take with others, it cannot be deemed indelicate or invidious, to institute a slight comparison of your opinions with those of Hume and Godwin. These philosophers contend strenuously for a sheer and all pervading necessity, controuling the motions of the intelectual and moral, as well as the revolutions of the physical world; you also, (affecting indeed just the contrary,) establish an absolute, uncontrouled necessity—They make no distinction between a physical and moral necessity; you do just the same; for on the admission of the principle, you can see no difference between a man and a machine—They conceive the doctrine of necessity to be inconsistent with freedom; you also believe it to be incompatible with human liberty—They make necessity to consist in downright fatalism; you, thinking with them, give it a similar representation—They deny any positive and immediate influence of the Deity on the human heart, and even ridicule as a silly and absurd superstition, every pretence to illapses of the spirit, stories of conversions, and experiences of grace; you have done the same thing in denying the direct and formal efficiency of God's spirit in conversion or sanctification, and treating with great severity of manner, and piercing sallies of wit, the warm and animated exercises of genuine piety—They hate and sneer at mystery; here you are not deficient in a similar display of talent—It is a prominent article in the creed of these philosophers, that "vice and weakness are founded upon ignorance and error," but that "truth has the faculty of expelling weakness and vice;" your system embraces the same principle, when it represents man as *necessarily governed by his passions and appetites* before he receives the truth, but that as soon as he knows it, that *knowledge enables him, or gives him moral power to choose obedience to God's law, without any other attraction.** One grand doctrine of these sophists is, that "truth is omnipotent," and it is, say they, "from the omnipotence of truth," that an inference may be taken with respect to

* Godwin's Pol. Just. vol. 1. p. 88. See Pamphlet, p. 80, 81.

the perfectability of man ;* I need not repeat, that you have uttered the same anti christian language respecting the omnipotence of truth.

This comparison might be extended much farther, but what I have done is sufficient to shew that your scheme of theology, rather than that of Dr. Edwards, approximates the detested system of Hume and Godwin. To be plain with you, sir, I really think, and when put to it, I presume I shall be able to give good reasons for my opinion, that the Divinity of your pamphlet, is but the philosophy of Godwin christianized; not that I believe this to have happened from design in you, but from the native tendency of the principles which you have unfortunately adopted.

It is not without reason that Forsyth and other respectable writers have classed Arminians and Jesuits, with the ancient Epicureans and Sadducees. Arminianism, is indisputably a real, though but a slight approximation toward the Epicurean philosophy of ancient times, which has been revived in modern days in the speculations of Godwin, Helvitius, Darwin, and others.† No sooner does a person desert Calvinism, than he begins to approach, imperceptibly to himself, the fatal doctrines of the new philosophy, as it is falsely called, for indeed it is neither new, nor is it philosophy, but sophistry and atheism. Arminianism, and this self-dubbed philosophy, are extreme

* See Godwin's Political Justice, vol. I. p. 84, 89.

† Let it not be supposed, that I mean here the opinions of Methodists in the United States, for their scheme of doctrines has a considerable leavening of Calvinism. But by Arminianism, I mean the doctrines of such men as Laud, Whitby, Turnbull, &c. The Methodists, indeed, hold certain principles in common with Arminians, but they retain some very important tenets of the Calvinistic or reformed theology, such as human depravity, the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, justification through the blood of Christ, experimental conversion, &c. These are the salt of their system, which preserves its savour and soundness; and would they make Bp. Burnett their model, rather than Wesley or Fletcher, it could not fail to improve their standing and character as a sect.

points in the gradation of error. The Pelagian, Universalian, Arian, Socinian and Deistical heresies, occupy intermediate grades on the same scale. Innumerable sectaries of ancient and modern times, though at first view they might seem to be little susceptible of arrangement in this classification, will be found to belong to one or other of these denominations, or to be shocking compounds of the whole of them, with some unimportant peculiarities, which serve to characterise them as distinct parties. Thus for instance, Shakerism is in its main features atheistic, yet it seems to blend in its composition, various corruptions of Christianity which have appeared in the world, and particularly those of Papists, Behemenists and Swedenborgians, and it is easy to remark, how very cordially it fraternizes with every odious sect that has appeared in the world from the Manecheeans and Ebionites, down to the most visionary and frantic zealots of modern days, not even excepting the infuriate and blood-stained fanatics of Munster.*

This representation may perhaps be deemed ungenerous by some, by others invidious. I neither wish to wound the feelings, nor impeach the standing of any party, farther than as opinion is concerned in these enquiries; but I do wish to call your attention, sir, to the views I am endeavouring to take, and I may venture, I think, to say they are founded in fact. That it is so, you have only to read the writings of Universalists, Arians, Socinians, Shakers, Halcyons, New Jerusalemites, Deists and Atheists, to be convinced. In them you observe the

* The infatuated retainers of this deplorable heresy, have published some time since a copious work, which they are pleased to dignify with the imposing title of the Testimony, but which in reality is a shameless and blasphemous libel on all truth, an unfeeling audacious outrage upon fact, decency and religion.—They execrate and proscribe in embittered language, all sects that have any claim to standing, and yet forsooth tell us, (and falsely too,) that they are not to be considered churches of Christ, because they have been guilty of persecution. What they would do were the sword in their grasp, is easily understood from the fiend-like spirit which breathes through their vile book; the design of which is obviously enough, to blazon error and belie truth.

same deep rooted and inveterate antipathies, the same objections to, and the same arguments against Calvinism, which appear in the works of Arminians. To be sure the former go much farther than the latter in making opposition, but they both correspond to a certain degree, and unite to reprobate this common object of disgust. All these distinctions of opinion, though they are *more* than Arminian, are *that too;* and let it be remembered, that it was from that grade of opinion that they began their march into the region of error. To be particular, sir, let me ask you to look into the works of Bollingbroke and of Swedenborg, the periodical publications of Halcyons, the Apology of the Springfield Presbytery, the Letters and Reply of Mr. Stone, the testimony of Shakers, and other recent productions of our country, and you will see a surprising coincidence of opinion, of remark and objection.

There is also another fact to which I can appeal with equal certainty; it is that this vast group of sectaries have been uniformly patronised by our modern soi disant philosophers in every country, whether France, Germany, Great Britain or Americ a;—it is a matter known to every person of tolerable information, and it is what we see passing before our eyes every day. These facts, sir, speak loudly to the candid enquirer.

To avoid the difficulties of the Calvinistic system, (for that, in common with other things, has its difficulties, but really fewer and less formidable than those of any other,) the inquirer has recourse to the Arminian hypothesis; but he has scarcely paused and surveyed his ground, till he discovers that also to be encumbered with perplexing difficulties. He then moves off to Pelagianism or Universalism, but still finding himself pressed with new and not less confounding difficulties, he rushes forward in the march of discovery and rejection, touching as he passes, the Arian, Sabellian, or Socinian schemes of doctrine, and finding still no scene of repose, he breaks assunder the bands of Messiah, and casts his cords from him for ever! But is he now unembarrassed? Has he got rid of difficulty or mystery? Not at all. The religion of nature has

difficulties unnumbered and overwhelming, and if he has any remaining sensibility he feels them, and flies to the dernier resort, Atheism. There the difficulties are a thousand times greater than before, and more faith required to retain his ground, than would make him an humble disciple of Jesus. This erratic route, sir, is no fancy, but something that is perpetually occurring. Restless desultory minds, having broke loose from the moorings of truth, commit themselves to the mercy of the winds and the waves on the wide ocean, without rudder or compass.

Though your scheme is, as we have seen, a scheme of necessity, still it is not so throughout—it is not an integer—it is not uniform. As far as I have been able to comprehend your reasonings or ideas, there seems to be a strange compound of the self-determining plan of Arminians and the necessity of Godwin, blended in the same system. You assert your belief of a self-determining power, by observing, "I will not pretend to explain the self-determining or self-exerting power of the understanding or the will more than many of the effects produced by them;" and also when you say, "The intellectual motion or action seems to begin in itself, and to go out into the field of sensation or simple ideas in quest of what is good, useful, or agreeable." p. 93. This I presume to be what you would allow to be a state of liberty, and if it is, there can be no liberty beyond the presentation of truth to the mind, and there it ceases for ever. Every intellectual motion beyond that, is the necessary effect of an omnipotent cause, and is precisely and infallibly determined by it to be just what is and nothing else. Faith, choice and every gracious act, are necessitated by an almighty and resistless causation, which neither the person himself who is the subject of it, nor any being in the universe can prevent or modify. Thus it clearly appears, that to a certain point man is free, beyond that necessity binds him. In a word, the sinner may be free, but the saint is a slave. This you must either allow, or undertake the arduous task of shewing as how intellectual motion or action let it be faith, love, choice, or any thing else embraced by your theory, can begin in itself, and be at the

same time the inevitable effect of an irresistible cause. Your system appears to want congruity of parts—it will not unite—it has no consistence, and cannot, I presume, be moulded into a complete continuous whole.

You have been polite enough, sir, to call the doctrines of your brethren "a farraginous mass,' —"an incoherent, multifarious, unintelligible jargon." But, sir, what are we to call that discordant assemblage of ideas, which you have thrown out in your pamphlet, on the theory of mind and religion? Ideas that are sometimes dubious, indefinite and desultory; often subtle, fugitive, and as untenable as grasped mercury; and when known, always conflicting, variant and repellent to each other. What shall we call it did I say?—To expose its want of consistence, and its errors, was to me a task sufficiently painful, without troubling myself or others with harsh, irritating epithets.

The doctrine of predestination though but slightly touched by you, involves even in your way of viewing it, the idea of necessity.

We have seen Dr. Edwards declare, that such necessity as attend the acts of men's wills is more properly called certainty than necessity; and to this certainty of actions in men, I cannot see why you should object, either as it respects the divine prescience or the liberty of those actions, since you have clearly admitted it when you remark, "no doubt he foresaw all the iniquity, obstinacy, and rejection of his gospel as clearly as he will know it at the last day; and was, and is now in as little suspense what he will do with the guilty as he will be when their sentence is pronounced." The absolute certainty of human actions is still more strongly asserted when you define the perfection of God's foreknowledge to be that which "consists in *knowing certainly what will come to pass*, though the causes lie hidden in the freedom of the human will, and in the contingency of second causes," p. 87, 8. *To know certainly what will come to pass*, implies all the certainty for which Dr. Edwards contends with respect to human acts and volitions: nor am I able to conceive in what way, you or any one else can keep out of his scheme while you yield so much. With such

concession it would require but little ingenuity to press you with every stern difficulty, every redoubted consequence which you urge against the doctrine of necessity. The knowledge of God is infinite, extending to all the past, the present and the future; whatever has been, is now, or will be is embraced by it. "His understanding is infinite." It is susceptible of no improvement or extension—it is absolutely perfect—what he knows must *be*, must come to pass; it either *has been*, *is now*, or *shall be*: for nothing can be the object of knowledge where existence is uncertain; nothing can be known but what has been, is now, or shall yet be. That which may be, or may not be, cannot be known; it is not nor can be the object of knowledge, for knowledge respects things, and them only. To suppose that God knows certainly that an event or thing will come to pass, which nevertheless may *be* or may not *be*, is clearly a contradiction; for how can he certainly know that a thing will come to pass, when it is *possible it should not come to pass.* If it is possible that a thing may be otherwise than God knows it shall be, then it is possible, that he may be mistaken in knowing what he certainly knows; for that it should be otherwise than he knows, and that he should be mistaken is the same thing. What God knows, therefore, is infallibly certain, and cannot be otherwise—But what God knows, he knew from eternity—"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"—Knowledge in him is infinite as to duration as well as to extent. In either sense it defies a limit. In one and in all respects, he is the same, yesterday, to day, and *for ever.* It was therefore certain, infallibly certain from all eternity, that things should come to pass just as they do come to pass, and no decree, no foreordination can make them more certain. For this conclusion, nothing else is wanting, my dear sir, but common sense, and the plainest declarations of sacred writ. Thus we see all events, and even the voluntary actions of men subjected to an infallible certainty from all eternity—a certainty which no decree can make more strong—a certainty which originates in the all perfect knowledge of the first cause of all things, and per-

vades the entire structure of the universe, the operations of matter, the varied combinations of things, and even the innumerable volitions of intelligent creatures. On this ground, an adversary might urge you with objections as to the want of liberty in man. Adopting your own style, and that of every opposer of divine decrees, he might say, "things will happen according to the imperative certainty of God's knowledge. It is in vain to resist the progress of things—if I am to sin I must sin; if I am to be damned I must be damned; what is known from eternity must be in spite of every effort to the contrary—I am dragged on passively and irresistibly, by the wheel of an eternal *certainty*, originating in the divine mind, in the bosom of eternity, and reaching down through all the revolutions and combinations of things, to every single volition of my mind, and passion of my soul—In vain I struggle, in vain I strive—I am borne on to my destiny by the resistless, the uncontrouled force of an almighty, everlasting *certainty*. Can my will reach back to eternity, and alter the certain knowledge of the Deity? Ah no! independent of my will or act in any shape, things will occur exactly according to their archetypes in the divine mind. No, I can change nothing, I can do nothing, I can will nothing but what God who made, and made me such as I am, foresaw or knew I should do, infinite ages before I had an existence. Can I penetrate the gulph of the past? Can I roll back eternity? Can I reverse my certain existence, actions or doom? Can I blot out the positive knowledge, and annihilate the infinite understanding of God? No, I am bound down to what I am, or do, or shall be, by a stern, invincible, irreversible certainty—No fate could bind me faster—Can I be guilty or innocent? Am I the subject of praise or blame? No! The praise or blame rests on the head of him who knew and made things what they are from eternity, and not on me, a worm of time, a feeble, limited speck of existence, who cannot recall a moment of past time, much less unravel the rolls of eternity to alter any thing!—There is no liberty, there is no vice, there is no virtue!" Who is not shocked at such a train of thought, at such daring inferences!

But they are as much your difficulties as ours; and while by urging them, you attempt to stagger the speculations of Dr. Edwards, it is easy to remark, that your own scheme is, in the same way, equally vulnerable. The truth is, these are not the legitimate consequences of either Dr. Edwards's certainty of voluntary actions in men, nor of your certain foreknowledge of God, nor yet of any decree or foreordination whatever: for certainty, wherever it exists, whether in the nature of things, in the divine foreknowledge, or in a decree, can have no necessitating influence on mens' voluntary acts. Such certainty respects *free actions*, and cannot therefore alter their nature. They are essentially free, and no *certainty* can deprive them of that freedom. Neither predestination, decrees, nor foreknowledge can at all affect the liberty of choosing or acting. I say, therefore, with Dr. Edwards, as every man may, who believes in the certain futurition of the acts and volitions of men, however it is understood to exist, whether in the divine decree, prescience, prophesy, or any thing else: "Nothing that I maintain supposes that men are at all hindered by any fatal necessity, from doing and even willing and choosing as they please, with full freedom, yea, with the highest degree of liberty that ever was thought of, or that ever could possibly enter into the heart of any man to conceive"*

There is no view we can take of this awful subject, which allows God to be what he is, but may be charged with destroying human liberty; making the Supreme Being unjust or cruel, and with innumerable objections. Though I believe the doctrine of predestination, and its perfect concordance with freedom in man, yet I wish not to trouble others with my speculations about it, for this very obvious reason; few men have either leisure or capacity to enter into them if I did; none would be benefited, and many might be seriously injured. It would be wise in most men to believe God's word rather than to speculate.

It is the doctrine of revelation as the following scriptures abundantly attest:

*Edwards's Works, vol. 5. p. 339.

Matt. 25. 34. Rom. 8. 29, 30. Ephes. 1. 3, 6, 11. 2 Tim. 1. 9. 2 Thess. 2. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 1, 2. John 6. 37—17. 2 to 24. Rev. 13. 8—17. 8. Dan. 4. 35. 1 Thess. 5. 19. Matt. 11. 26. Exod. 4. 21. Prov. 16. 4. Acts 13. 48. From these and other texts, I believe the doctrine to be true. I believe it also because it is true in fact, I mean in prophesy and its completion, and also in a particular providence. And this said, I go no farther, but would reverently look forward to another state of things for the entire comprehension of the subject and the solution of the difficulties attending it, and leave others that wish it, to pursue subtle and intricate arguments on a question so vast and awful, with a full impression that such speculations can never be profitable, and may be hurtful. Mark the employment of fallen angels as sketched by the pencil of Milton, who was himself a predestinarian:

> "Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,
> In tho'ts more elevate, and *reason'd high*
> Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,
> Fix'd-fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,
> And found no end in puzzling mazes lost."

To see poor weak creatures, and fallible as weak, undertake a display of these mysterious, and in some respects inscrutable subjects, is matter of painful remark. In our miserable and distracted country, the press has teemed with productions, and monstrous ones too, on topics of this kind—productions which make nothing plain but the vanity, ignorance, and unchristian temper of the authors. An host of scribblers have sprung up, rank as noxious weeds in our fertile soil; and though they have read nothing carefully, no, not even the Bible, and are incapable of taking a consistent or extended view of any subject, yet they plunge headlong into the depths of divinity, and drivel out volumes of curses against others who cannot have the hardihood or folly to be as silly and profane as themselves.

And the pulpit—Oh the pulpit! what profanation has not it received!—converted into a throne of judgment and anathema—transformed into a theatre of contention,

wrangling and abuse—prostituted to the vile purposes of slander, insolence, and evil speaking—made the privileged scene of brawling intemperance, and crude blasphemy! "These doctrines," they vociferate, "came from hell—all who believe them must go to damnation."—But I will not defile my page with their unchristian rhapsodies, harsh censures and daring usurpations of God's prerogative in judging. Poor creatures, they manifest every thing but the sweet charities of that divine religion of which they affect to be ministers—every thing but that wisdom which is from above, and which is pure, peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. In a word, they resemble fallen angels in every thing but *intellect*.

Permit me, while on the subject of human liberty, to remark, that the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit on the soul, are not, more than moral necessity or divine decrees, incompatible with freedom in man. He who formed the spirit of man within him, can have access to it with infinite ease, and act upon it in a manner perfectly suited to its constitution and moral nature. I do not mean, however, to pursue an argument in favour of the opinion, but will produce the fact itself from St. Paul, which is really better than a thousand arguments: "But thanks be to God *who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus* for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation, but *being more forward of his own accord* he went unto you." 2 Cor. 8. 16, 17. The passage declares that the earnest care and promptness of acting, wrought of God in the heart of Titus (a circumstance which the apostle recounts with gratitude to its divine author) was not inconsistent with the perfect freedom of his own mind. The same idea is forcibly expressed in the subjoined pasage also: "For in him we live, and move, [Gr. kinoumetha are moved] and have our being. Acts 17. 28. Here we see life, motion, and existence attributed to divine power as its immediate cause, and no laws of mechanism can account for the phenomena of life, or the operations of our nature without it. The blood circulates, the heart beats, digestion proceeds, chyle is absorbed, assimilation goes on,

the will excites and governs muscular motion, and all this is effected by the immediate power of the Deity. Yet who is the less free on that account?—Every one is conscious of perfect freedom. The text is general, and applies to the whole constitution of our nature, and the operation of grace upon the soul. It is just as true in a spiritual as in a natural sense, that in him we live, and move, and have our being—this has been largely proven. But in this respect too, there is no infraction of our liberty—we are conscious of entire freedom.

All of these terrible things of binding men's wills, making them machines, dragging them as pitiable victims at the wheel of necessity, and a thousand more, are but 'the "gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire" of theologues and metaphysicians. Scripture and fact know nothing about them.

But it is time I should say something on the inability of man; and allow me to remark, that you seem to confound natural and moral inability, and consequently to throw some confusion into the subject by treating it in that way. Moral power, according to the view you have taken of it, consists in knowledge, and moral weakness in ignorance. This view of the subject is not novel. "The power of obeying a law, established with any proper authority, on earth or in heaven, has never been attributed by the common sense of mankind to any other cause but knowledge of the law, nor has any necessity of disobedience been admitted from passions &c. but from ignorance." "Moral power or weakness is therefore never attributed to passion, disposition, taste, or any natural or adventitious disposition, but to the informed or uninformed understanding only." p. 85, 86. According to your scheme, a knowledge of law confers power to obey that law, and infers blame in case of disobedience: ignorance of law constitutes moral inability to obey a law, and absolves from blame if disobeyed.

To bring this proposition (which indeed is nothing more nor less than a dogma of the new philosophy) to the test of fact and scripture, let me ask you whether Adam after his fall had power to obey the law of God? Whether

he had power to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and soul, and might and mind? If you say he had not that power, but was unable, I again ask, in what did his inability consist? Will you say in Ignorance? No, you cannot—and this reveals at once the fallacy of your doctrine. Fallen man retained his knowledge, and yet you dare not say that in that condition he had power to obey the law; for fact and scripture concur to establish the decision of your confession, that, "no mere man since the the fall is able in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed." If an *informed understanding* be the same with moral power, not only all fallen men to whom the law has been published, but the damned in hell who know the law and groan under its curse, and all devils too, have power to obey the law of God; for a doubt cannot be entertained, that these beings who received their knowledge in heaven, were luminously instructed in the precepts of that law whose penalty they now suffer. As these unhappy beings suffer intensely, and must be anxious to be released from pain, and as Christ came to *render obedience practicable*, there is no doubt but they will all put forth the power they possess to obey the divine law, and thus rid themselves of the pains they endure!

The scripture teaches us, that by the law is the knowledge of sin, and in consequence of that very information which the law brings to the heart, *the strength of sin* and *the absolute weakness* of men are practically discovered. What the apostle Paul has declared in his epistle to the Corinthians, that "the strength of sin is the law," he has copiously and experimentally discussed in the epistle to the Romans, where he treats the subject in detail; and shows very clearly, that the law, by the light which it flashes upon the mind, gives vigor to sin, reveals human weakness and generates death. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. What shall we say then, is the law sin? God forbid. "Nay, I had not known sin but by the law—But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of

concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead—For I was alive without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Thus he learns from the spiritual, holy and good law of God, that he is *carnal, sold under sin, doing what he allows not, knowing that in him (that is in his flesh) there dwelleth no good thing, and though he wills it, finds not how to perform that which is good.* Again, having contrasted the insufficiency of the law to give power to obey God with the active energy of the Spirit of life, he continues to urge the weakness, and the absolute inability of man as discovered by it. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." And having stated that the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, he brings out this strong conclusion: "so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." From which conclusion he infers the power of the gospel and the necessity of a divine operation in order to holiness. Where now, my dear sir, is the doctrine of moral power from a knowledge of the law?—Nor yet does a knowledge of the gospel confer moral power to believe or obey it in a saving sense. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the haavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance."—In this melancholy case, the highest state of illumination is supposed, and yet we are told that repentance is impossible. though the persons possess the highest information as to divine truth, there is a total want of moral power. It is the case with every reprobate on earth, and every damned spirit in hell, to want moral power or ability to preform morally good actions, and still we must own that their knowledge is far from being deficient.

Weigh the word of God—look at fact—and you must see, I think, that something more than knowledge of the law is necessary, to confer moral power upon those who are without God, and without hope in the world. You are no less mistaken in asserting, that *moral power or*

weakness, is never attributed to passion, disposition, taste, or any natural or adventitious disposition. When our Lord says "how *can ye* believe who receive honor, one of another," the implication is clear, that the inability of the Jews to believe his doctrine, and profess their attachment to him, arose from the love of fame and worldly honor, and not from want of information. The Jews had the holy scriptures in their hand—even that law which is perfect, converting the heart; and they heard the discourse of him who spake as man never so spake; *how could they* believe, while the ruling passion in their hearts was the love of honor? And when the Apostle says, the carnal mind is *not subject to the law*, neither indeed *can be*; there is direct proof that inability arises from carnal passions and dispositions, and when he concludes, that they who are in the flesh *cannot* please God, what is it but saying, that inability, or moral weakness, is the result of criminal appetites, passions and lusts, which are the things implied in being in the flesh. "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, *he cannot be my disciple.*" Here moral weakness, is attributed to the inordinate love of connexions and life. "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye *cannot hear my word*—Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do—and because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not—He that is of God heareth God's words; ye, therefore, hear them not, because *ye are not of God.*" John, viii. 42—47. In this text also, inability of the Jews to hear Christ and believe his word, is ascribed to their *being not of God*, but of *the devil*, and doing his lusts:—and the Apostle Paul, ascribes moral weakness in believers, to the unsubdued lusts and corruptions of the flesh; "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v. 17. Thus it is, that scripture bears a clear and direct testimony against your hypothesis.

That kind of impotence, which arises from the strength of corrupt passions and inclinations, is a very

distinct thing from that which arises from ignorance, mental incapacity, want of opportunity or constraint, though you every where confound the one with the other; and if we would have unembarrassed views of this subject, it becomes indispensible that we make the distinction. The first is *moral*, the last is *natural inability*—the first infers guilt, the last frees from blame. If I want a capacity to understand my duty, or, having capacity, if I have had no means of knowing it, or, having both these, if I am compelled by force to act contrary to what I know to be right, I labor under a natural inability, and no guilt, no blame, attaches to my conduct. The idiot, the savage, the slave, under the lash of a brutal master, can violate law, and yet be blameless in the estimation of all the world. But if the same thing be done by one who has a capacity and opportunity to know the law, and is free from all physical constraint, and acts from the impulse of vanity, passion or lust, it becomes a case of moral inability, and subjects the person to blame. In the application of this distinction to religion, we say that the sinner has natural power to do all that the gospel requires of him, and consequently is criminal if he neglects or refuses to do so. There is no other inability in his case but what is moral, consisting in the presence of lusts and evil passions in the mind, such as pride, vanity, love of the world, desires after sensual pleasures, hatred of holiness and truth, and the like, and such inability infers his guilt and condemnation. In his way there is no natural obstruction, no lack of opportunity, no destitution of suitable powers to prevent his conversion to God. To him the gospel is presented; its provision is ample, its offer unlimited. His natural powers are every way sufficient to believe, repent, and love God. He has power to hear, read and meditate upon the word, and to attend upon all the means of grace. But he does not do it; and why? His heart is wicked, he is a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. He is morally unable to return to God. And who would say that he is not deeply criminal, and deserving indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish? It is really astonishing, that men should not make the distinction between moral and natural power in

a religious sense, with the same facility which they manifest in common life. A man owes to a large amount, but he has been unsuccessful in trade, he has been afflicted in his family or person; with all his heart he would extinguish his debts, but he has nothing to pay; he labors under natural inability, he is honest in heart, and is neither guilty nor blameable. Another is indebted to an equal or greater amount; he has an extensive overgrown property; he has countless sums hoarded up and canker eaten in his coffers; he has the most abundant facilities for liquidating the debt which stands against him; but he is not willing to pay; he loves money so well he cannot part with it; covetousness has gained a complete ascendancy over his mind; he is so dishonest he will not pay a farthing he owes: this man is *morally unable* to pay his debts, he is so wicked he cannot be just, but every one blames him, and he is guilty. Two men are called upon to do an alms—the one has neither silver nor gold, he has nothing to bestow; he has however a tender and benevolent heart, and gives his all, a tear: the other has overflowing coffers, but covetousness has subjected his soul and steeled his heart, he gives nothing: the wretched pauper is neither clothed nor warmed; both were unable to give alms, yet the former is absolved and the latter condemned. Innumerable instances of this kind occur in common life, and nobody finds the least difficulty in deciding or making the proper discrimination; and if the same were done in religion, we should hear no more of this redoubted objection to efficacious grace; "you tell the sinner he is not able to believe, and then damn him for not doing what he cannot do." It is amazing, and almost exceeds belief, how an host of sectaries rave on this subject, and stun our ears with their crude and desultory declamations respecting *can* and *cannot*, in downright slander of what Calvinists really hold. I can here make a direct appeal to fact and experience, where the highest possible degree of moral weakness can in no instance be found to extenuate, much less to absolve from guilt or blame. Never did it appear stronger in any human creature than in the celebrated Servin, who, though a perfect prodi-

gy as to mental and bodily vigor, his mighty genius ranging through all science, even theology itself, with infinite ease, was a downright monster of depravity; in whom every thing like moral principle was totally extinguished. "He was," says the Duke of Sully in his memoirs, "treacherous, cruel, cowardly, deceitful, a liar, a cheat, a drunkard and a glutton, a sharper in play, immersed in every species of vice, a blasphemer, an atheist; in a word, in him might be found all the vices that are contrary to nature, honor, religion, and society, the truth of which he himself evinced with his latest breath; for he died in the flower of his age, in a common brothel, perfectly corrupted by his debaucheries, and expired with the glass in his hand, cursing and denying God."* If ever man were morally unable to perform one good act, it was this man, and yet no person would say he was without demerit, or blameless. When we see the drunkard so entirely enslaved by habit and a love for ardent spirits, that he is unable to resist appetite, does any one acquit him of blame? Or if covetousness can usurp the supremacy of the mind, and extinguish every tender, humane or religious sentiment, (and we have reason to believe it sometimes does so,) it would not free any one from blame. But I will state cases to which you cannot object; I mean those in scripture, who are said to be "past feeling, having their conscience seered as with a hot iron;" those who are given up to "strong delusion, to believe a lie that they might be damned;" and those who have so fallen that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. Here moral inability has reached its highest grade, but still the persons are esteemed guilty, and the more so, as they are extremely wicked. We must either allege that a person in such a state cannot sin at all, or admit that moral weakness involves guilt and blame, no matter how invincible or overpowering it may be; and this done, the controversy is decided as to the conduct of sinners in rejecting the gospel, who are so careless and wicked they cannot or will not receive it, and live for ever.

* Vol. 3. p. 217.

From this review of the doctrine, it is then plain, that the question is not whether men in a natural state can do *any thing*; but whether they can by their own native powers, and without the internal assistance of the Spirit, do that which is pleasing to God and saving to the soul? We have never doubted that there are certain things required of unregenerate man, in order to a change of heart, which are perfectly within the reach of their natural powers to perform. They are required, (and they are certainly able to comply with it,) to attend upon the outward dispensation of the gospel, and all the means of grace; they have power to read or hear the word, weigh its evidences, and to decide on its inspiration and truth; they are capable of receiving it, as it is, the very word of God, reflecting deeply, seriously and diligently upon its great and awful doctrines, and of praying to the Supreme Being and author of it, to make them effectual to their regeneration and comfort; if they fail to do this it is through carnal security, slothfulness, love of sin and contempt of God, and will consequently be justly punished for such failure, when God shall reckon with them for their crimes. The omission of these things, or the careless performance of them, is the great cause of their everlasting destruction. They shun the light which would reprove their deeds, they neglect or supinely use the means of grace, they love darkness and the pleasures of sin, and this is what gives their damnation all its dreadful emphasis—"This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." The whole irreligious world must confess, that they are not doing what they are conscious is really in their power, and therefore all pleadable pretences with respect to inability, will be unavailing. If their own heart condemn them, God is greater than their heart, and will condemn them also. Even now, in the silence of the heart, in seasons of solemn reflection, conscience smites them for their sloth, inattention, and love of the world, and in the judgment of the great day, it will utter in a voice of thunder, its approbation of the justice of the sentence that shall doom them to an intolerable hell.

As we believe that the atonement of Jesus Christ is infinitely valuable and precious,* that the offer of the gospel as well as its provisions, is free, general, and indefinite, and that there is nothing to prevent the sinner's embracing the gospel and receiving mercy but his own want of will, his criminal disinclination of heart, and wicked resistance against God and his grace: we are but little disturbed, sir, with the vehemence of your rhetoric, when you represent our system as teaching, that God *never designed, prepared, nor willed salvation for certain sinners of the human race, but that he had predestinated them to hell by a positive, irresistible decree for his own glory, and that he had no other design in all the declarations of mercy he has made than that of undoing them for ever, and sinking them to the lowest hell for rejecting his gospel.* Rhetorical paintings of this nature are entirely irrelevant, and never meet the question in its true form, which is really nothing more nor less than this, *are sinners willing to be saved?* If they are willing, there is abundant salvation for them in Christ Jesus—if they are not, God will be just in their condemnation. The question is not how this unwillingness came, nor yet how it is to be removed; but does it involve guilt, is it just in God to punish it? And this granted (as it must necessarily be) then it is just in God to punish sinners for their wilful and obstinate rejection of the gospel. Do you say that he must remove the unwillingness of their hearts, otherwise they are not chargeable, nor is the gospel offer sincere? I reply, that God is no more bound to remove the unwillingness of their hearts than he was to provide salvation, or if he is, salvation is of debt, not of grace, and the whole scheme of redemption is subverted; and farther, that it is not necessary to the freedom or sincerity of the offer that God should make

* "His [Christ's] blood is not only sufficient to redeem all those that are actually redeemed by it, but even the whole world also. And were there so many worlds of men as there are men in the world, it would be sufficient for them also; and yet there would be an overplus of value: for all those worlds of men would rise but to a finite bulk; but this blood is infinite in its worth and dignity." Flavel—Fountain of life Opened—Sermon 15.

them willing to receive it. But the best answer to all such cavils, and perhaps the only one that should be given, is that of St. Paul: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

I shall, sir, close my correspondence with you by making some direct objections to your theory of religion: and,

1st. One important objection to the views you have taken of religion is, that they are throughout selfish. This objection you anticipate, and attempt to remove, but as you make "the original notions of pefection among men" the test of a great question in religion, I have no disposition, were your arguments better than they are, to reply to any thing you have said. To prop up that system of selfishness which you offer to the world, you glance at some scripture facts, such as that of Moses' having respect to the recompence of reward, and that of Christ's enduring the cross, and despising the shame for the joy that was set before him. Allowing these examples to have the application you wish, it is hard to see how a proper regard to personal interest can be construed into selfishness; for that regard may be subordinated to a greater object, which I have the fullest conviction was the case with Moses, and Christ, in the alleged proof. The grand motive with Moses, was love of God and his glory, "for he endured as seeing him that is invisible." And with respect to Jesus Christ, it is doing great violence to scripture to allege that the joy set before him was personal emolument or happiness. An interpretation so cold, so contracted, is but illy calculated to represent the sublime motives of the Son of God. One moving cause of all he did or suffered, was his magnanimous love—a love unsolicited, pure, and entirely disinterested—"As Christ also loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour—Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it."—To suppose his own individual felicity was the ruling object of the Son of God, is an idea as gross as it is unscriptural. Did he receive any augmentation of happiness or glory by his loving and saving men? To affirm he did, is to say, he was not infinitely glorious

and happy before he suffered for men. The word joy in scripture often denotes the cause or matter of joy. Thus St. Paul calls the Phillippian and Thessalonian converts his "joy and crown."* In this sense I understand the joy mentioned, Heb. 12. 2. It was the matter or object of joy which was set before the Saviour, and if you would know what that object was, let the Evangelists John and Luke instruct you, who say it was the glory and sovereignty of God. John 17. 4, 5. (Comp. 13. 31, 32.) Luke 10. 21.

The voice of prophesy had long before this declared the same thing, that it was to do the will of God that he came into the world, and that in doing this was his delight. Ps. 40. 8. and in one of the bitterest hours of his sorrows we hear him utter the same truth: "Not my will but thine be done." The idea is inconsistent with the self-denial and submission, as well as the declared objects of the Saviour's visit to our earth. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes (not his own) he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8. 9. And this very exemplification of the Saviour's disinterested regard for sinners is purposely introduced, by St. Paul, as a model of benevolence for the imitation of the Corinthian church—It is in the same style that he teaches the Romans disinterested benevolence: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and *not to please ourselves*. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even *Christ pleased not himself*; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Rom. 15. 1—3.

No, sir, the love of the divine Saviour was not the cold, calculating, selfish thing your scheme would teach us, but a more pure and elevated passion. You think the distinction between benevolent and selfish affections unhappily conceived. But who conceived this distinction?—The author of it is the Son of God himself, whose first lesson to every disciple was, and still is, LET HIM DENY

* Phil. 4. 1—1. Thess. 2. 19.

HIMSELF: and he even puts self-love below the level of virtue altogether, as something, which any person however careless or wicked, may have. "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them." In his word too, divine charity is characterized as an affection which "seeketh not her own," and the wicked as those who are "lovers of their own selves."* And had you been governed by the determination of your own Confession of Faith, you would have seen *self-love* and self-seeking denounced as violations of the first precept of the decalogue. Disinterested benevolence is no Hopkinsion fiction, but the sublime morality of Jesus Christ, our divine teacher; and to see it exposed and blasted in the system of a christian minister, is, to me, a subject of surprise and regret. Whether you will feel your scheme rebuked or not, you must at least be pleased with the eloquence of the subjoined remonstrance, which, on a certain occasion, was designed to chastise the cold and selfish policy of certain Christian bishops: "Let the Pagan priest of Jove or the sensual priest of Mahomet, deliver such doctrine, but don't you part with the palm of Christianity, nor relinquish the lofty self-surrendering precepts of your gospel, to poach in politicks, for little and wicked tenets, in order to brand your prayer-book with the image of a sorry selfishness, which would disgrace the frontispiece of a Machiavel."†

Though I would not be understood to say, that a proper regard to personal and individual happiness is inconsistent with, or may not be a part of virtue, (for this is what I certainly believe) yet where self-love is the ruling passion, where it characterizes any system of morals or religion, where the principle is unreservedly avowed, that the divine government is not approbated or loved by us, unless it secures our happiness, I will not hesitate to say, that there is a direct inversion of true morality, and an entire dissolution of the christian system. This vile

* See Matt. 16. 24. Luke 6. 32. 1. Cor. 13. 5. 2 Tim. 3. 2.

† Grattan.

principle admitted, and God is laid under contribution; he must give us safety and glory, otherwise he cannot be an object of estimation or love; he cannot be just unless he consult our happiness, and give us a chance for salvation; and thus, Deity comes under obligations to sinful man; grace is made matter of debt, and the whole plan of redemption, as a scheme of unmeritted favour, is totally subverted. Such, sir, is the ruinous tendency of your plan of religion.

2d. I object to your scheme of religion, that it subverts the great doctrine of the ministration of the Holy Spirit, and thus dissolves the whole system of christianity; for without it, christianity has lost its power, its life-spring, the vigorous principle which renders it triumphant over the prejudices of apostate man. "For the weapons of our warfare [the truths of the gospel] are not carnal, but mighty *through God*" (not through their appropriate powers) "to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* The ministration of the Spirit is the last effort of merciful heaven towards sinners. It is the consummating stroke of the divine economy in applying and rendering effectual the redemption wrought out by Mesiah. Without it the whole scheme of grace would fail of its effect, and be for ever frustrated. Jesus Christ was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification. It was, nevertheless, expedient that he should go to the Father and send the Comforter: It was done. The Comforter came down to dwell with men, to abide with them for ever, and thus to realize to them the promises of Christ, in being with the church alway to the end of the world. He represents the Saviour upon earth, fulfils his blessed promises, and puts the finishing touch upon the great work of redemption. It is his personal agency that converts, sanctifies, and perfects the soul in that divine life which meetens it for the everlasting enjoyment of God. To resist these

* Cor. 10. 4-5.

operations, to deny them, to expose them, to ridicule them, is an attempt as full of danger as it is full of sin. And this, sir, is what you have done. You recognize no "cause or agency in conversion or sanctification, but faith in the word"—You admit of no operation upon the soul but that of which "the testimony of God is the cause"—You tell us, we "never read of a mean or cause of believing but the promises of God," and that the new birth "is wrought in the heart by his written word in its appropriate powers"—and you solemnly declare that the "written word is the only cause that can beget faith," which with you, is the same thing with regeneration.* From these plain declarations, as well as from the entire structure of your plan, is obvious to every person, that you exclude absolutely and in form, the agency of the Holy Ghost. Your scheme admits no other agency, no other operation than that of the word, unless it be the sinners faith, which appears to be an agency of some account in your theory. The Spirit has no agency, and never had any agency since the days of miracles, and the closing of the divine testimony.† Since that time, he has nothing more to do with sinners in conversion or sanctification—His agency expired seventeen centuries ago, and ever since that period the written word is the *only cause* which can beget faith, or operate the new birth. Thus, you deny the ministration of the Spirit, and what is worst of all, you ridicule the very idea of such a thing as enthusiasm. The belief of your doctrines, sir, and practising upon them, I am bold to declare, is fraught with danger to the soul. It is in some degree or other sinning against the Holy Ghost, but to what degree it may reach, is not for me to say. It is God only, who knows the various biasses of our nature and the

* See p. 7, 19, 22, 46, 53.

† To call the operation of truth the agency of the Spirit, is a satire upon language and common sense. The word of the Spirit is an effect of his agency, not the thing itself. How then can it be an effect of his agency, and his agency too, at the same time? The scripture never ascribes agency to truth, but uniformly treats it as a mean or instrument in the hand of an agent.

springs of action within us, the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed, and the exact pressure of every temptation, that can or ought to judge us; and he solemnly claims it as his own prerogative. How far a good man may err on this awful ground, I presume neither to know nor decide, but certain it is there is such a thing as sinning against the Spirit of God. In some degrees this crime is pardonable; in others it is the sin unto death.—These precepts of christianity, "grieve not the Spirit—quench not the Spirit," which apply to believers generally, and in one age as well as another, and which could not at this time be violated at all, if your ideas are correct, shew very clearly that good men and seekers may sin against the Holy Spirit. But there is a sin against the Spirit which forms the highest grade of guilt under the gospel, and is denominated the sin against the Holy Ghost. Dr. Owen delivers an alarming judgment on this subject.

"It is," says he, "sottish ignorance and infidelity to suppose, that, under the gospel, there is *no communication between God and us, but what is, on his part, in laws, commands, and promises; and on ours, by obedience performed in our own strength, and upon our convictions unto them.* To exclude hence the real internal operations of the Holy Ghost, is to destroy the gospel; and is the true ground and reason why there is a sin against the Holy Ghost, that is irremissible; for he coming unto us to make application of the love of the Father, and grace of the son unto our souls; in the contempt of him, there is a contempt of the whole actings of God towards us in a way of grace, for which there can be no remedy."*

While this quotation sketches with great exactness your error, I would hope it does not pronounce your destiny.

To allow that there is no communication between God and the souls of men, but what on his part consists in laws, commands and promises; and on theirs, by obedience and faith, is, according to this great man, ignorance and infidelity; and to exclude the real and internal operations of the Holy Ghost, is to destroy the Gospel. This,

* See Owen on the Spirit, vol. 1. p. 320, 321.

sir, is just what you have done as to doctrine; and in addition to your rejection of the truth, you treat those who believe it with banter and insult. You may perhaps think lightly of these things, but I, for one, would not deny the agency of the Spirit, much more make it the object of raillery or sarcasm, for a thousand worlds.

3d. This scheme of doctrine robs God of his glory, and consequently is false and objectionable. Though you invest the word with supremacy, and give it the most highly concentrated power, yet, it is very plain, a pageant compliment only is intended, as your scheme will not bear you out in doing so; for when we come to enquire into the character of this supremacy of the word, this more than omnipotent cause of faith, we find that it derives all its consequence from human power at last, which brings truth near, or repels it, at pleasure; says to it, "come, and it cometh, or do this, and it doeth it," and at will, may place an eternal veto on its approaches; "hitherto shalt thou come but no farther." Thus, the Almighty word is subjected to the management, control and direction of a poor worm, a being of yesterday. True, you tell me the power of the word in operating faith, is, at a certain point, paramount and peerless, is the highest, the most irresistible agent in the universe. But what gives it the opportunity to act, gives it power to be, and even permits it to be more efficient than God himself? Human agency. Still do you repeat, man could not have been saved by any exertion of his own, if God had not given him his word, and provided remission in the blood of his own Son! Very well—But that done, does it save him? No such matter—God's word, his counsel, his oath, his Son's blood, resurrection, ascension and intercession; the descent of the Comforter, tongues, revelations, miracles, all, all are unavailing, weak; inefficient! After Heaven's best efforts he is not saved; no, no, all that is done decides nothing! What then decides? What puts it into the power of these stupendous preparations of Heaven to become effectual? The sinner's own agency! Ah! that is the talisman that dissolves the spell—the power that brings the machinery of Heaven into operation—the magnificent something that

rules into effect the economy of Deity, and shapes the fate of the sinner to an endless happiness and glory. Take what point you please in your system, and you must come out here—speak as splendidly as you can of the infinite benevolence of God in providing salvation, and soar as lofty a flight as fancy can carry you, in painting the proud fabric of redemption—you drop at last to the earth, and shew us a base of human power. Like the image of the Babylonish monarch, the head may be fine gold, but the feet are iron and clay; or like the philosophy of the Indian mentioned by Mr. Locke, it may begin with a world, but drops at last to a broad backed turtle. Your theology is an inversion of the gospel, which evidently and uniformly, in all itsparts, ascribes to God the operation and efficiency by which the word and ordinances become converting to the soul, and gives him all the glory of so great a work; and in denying this blessed doctrine, you do dishonor to God, and provoke his jealousy. The Lord is jealous of his glory, and will resent any attempt that is made to rob him of it. His wrath will burn intensely against every one that fails to honor him as he should, or give him the glory due to his name, as he smote Uzzah for giving the ark a presumptuous touch, or as he smote Herod, who took the praise of his eloquence to himself, and gave not God the glory." On this last case Dr. Edwards very judiciously remarks, "If it be very sinful for a man to take to himself the glory of such a qualification as eloquence, how much more a man's taking to himself the glory of divine grace, God's own image, and that which is infinitely God's most excellent, precious, and glorious gift, and man's highest honor, excellency, and happiness, whereby he is made partaker of the divine nature, and becomes a godlike creature?*

4th. I object to your plan, that it tends to render prayer useless, as well as a great part of God's word insignificant and vain. From what you suggest, we are to believe that God has given us his word, and its power is omnipotent; we have only to bring it into the view of the

* Edw. Works, vol. 5. p. 416.

understanding, and faith, and regeneration, instantly follow; our sanctification proceeds in the same way, and ultimately we are crowned. In all this, no agency but *our own*, no *efficacy* but *that of truth* is concerned—none is admissible, nor can be. Why then pray to God at all? For instance, why should we use that petition in the Lord's prayer, "thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," if God has nothing to do in promoting his will, which is the sanctification of sinners, more than he has already done? Or, why should the penitent hurry to the temple, and cry with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" The promise of life is within the reach of his faculties, he has power to believe it, and that faith works out his salvation with divine and infallible energy? His business then, in acting upon what is claimed by your system, is to believe, not to pray. There is this remarkable petition in the Lord's prayer, "deliver us from the evil one," that is, from Satan, and the powers of his kingdom: and in conformity to this prayer, he is represented every where in scripture, as a being of high rank, of prodigious power, and of consummate art, and as being at the head of a formidable host of malignant spirits, both marshalling them, and using his own power for the ruin of men. Here a great, a redoubted agency is employed against us, and to what agency shall we resort for its counteraction and repulse? Our Lord bids us pray, as well as hold up the shield of faith, and wield the sword of the spirit; but to pray on your plan, sir, would be absurd and incongruous; for according to that, God has done all for his vineyard that he can or will do in time—he has finished his work, he has exhausted his resources—he neither can nor will do more—he has sat down upon his throne, to wait in repose the issues of what he has wrought. To pray for his agency or efficient aid, would be an exercise replete with folly. Instead of this empty unmeaning ceremony of praying, we ought to dig deep, consider, reflect deeply, calculate as we should and as we can, to bring the truth near, and our sanctification and safety from hell, will be the infallible result. "If any man hath wisdom," says James, "let him ask of God, who giveth li

berally, and upbraideth not." No, if any man lack wisdom, let him examine carefully, and ponder well the living oracles of God, and he will be wise. To ask of him who gives no more, is as insulting as useless. "Ye ask and have not, because ye ask amiss." Asking in any shape is amiss, when nothing can be had in return. We have only to approximate truth, place ourselves in its all-potent focus, and our lusts will be consumed, and holiness promoted. "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much," says James again—Ah no! it can avail just nothing at all. Far retired from mortal cries, the Deity neither hears nor gives any thing. The word represents him, he has put forth his omnipotence into it; there is no cause of faith or regeneration *so high, so coercive* as that; sinners have but to embrace it, and their souls shall live. Such is the expression of your system.

In vain are we commanded *to pray without ceasing, to pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting*—in vain are we exhorted, that *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and all that are in authority*—in vain are we told "to stand, having our loins girt with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;" if, after all, our prayers, supplications, and warm aspirations to a throne of grace, for ministers, magistrates, sinners, saints, or for ourselves, God puts forth no immediate power, sheds down no direct influence, to aid, strengthen, or bless any of his creatures. On this principle, too, all the promises for the extension of Christ's kingdom, so profusely scattered through the old and new Testament, and reaching down to the remotest times, embracing the accession of the Jews, and the fullness of the Gentiles, would be as nugatory on your principles, as that prayer taught by our Lord, "thy kingdom come." When it is promised that "all nations shall come and worship before

God, and glorify him—that Israel shall be saved—that his people shall be willing in a day of his power—that he shall rule in the midst of his enemies, bind Satan, and reign gloriously in the earth; and when, it is added with great emphasis, "I the Lord will hasten it;" the whole is insignificant and vain, because this great revolution of moral character, this establishment of Christ's empire in the hearts of men, must issue from something else than the efficiency of God in fulfilling his promises; I mean the operation of that undefinable principle in men, a self determining power in the will.* The completion of all prophesy concerning such events, the accomplishment of all the promises, rests, according to this hypothesis, upon the fickle, the changeful, precarious agency of men. This is not all—"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Ps. 2. In this remarkable text, the Father in conformity to the decree, bids the son ask, and promises to give the heathen and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession and inheritance, and we know that the fulfilment of this took place after Christ's resurrection from the dead, and his entering upon the kingly and intercessorial branches of his office. See Acts 13. 33—Rom. 1. 4. And let us remember that Jesus was invested with an unchangeable priesthood by the oath of God, and that in consequence of that very priesthood, by interceding for sinners he becomes able to save them, and thus inherits the promise of the Father respecting the heathen world. But all these solemn, all these august things, hang for accomplishment on the feeble, the tottering agency of poor condemned creatures! Thus it is that this ruinous speculation tends to render prayer useless and absurd, the promises vain and uncertain, and the decree and oath of God, the intercession and power of Jesus dubious and equivocal things, controled, directed, or

* See Ps. 36. Ps. 10. Rom. 11. Rev. 19, 20. Isa. 60. Dan. 7.

nullified by the will or power of poor sinful dependent worms of the dust.

5th. Your theory evidently cuts off the greater part of Christ's work, as a risen and reigning mediator. You allow him no direct or immediate control over any part of his vast kingdom. He has made the arrangement, and things proceed by their own vis insita, their own immanent powers. Since the descent of the Spirit to reveal truth and operate miracles in attestation of its divinity, there has not been, nor is there now, any influence but what is mediate. The energy of means is every thing, is omnipotent—The original powers impressed upon the institutions of grace have continued, and must continue to the end of time, to operate with undeminished force in promoting the holiness of our nature, and the glory of God. Two enquiries should be made, and fully settled, before this scheme should be received as matter of faith—Is it rational? Does it correspond with the testimony of scripture?

Some late philosophers have taken much pains to resuscitate and improve the Epicurean philosophy. Their ideas are these, that the First Cause impressed upon primordial atoms, or original matter, certain immutable properties, which going into complete operation, generated the world, peopled its seas, and covered its continents with animal life, from man down to a worm. While these philosophers ascribe life and motion in the visible universe, and even sensation and thought to the activity and operation of certain original principles communicated to matter, you appear to me to do the same thing with respect to the spiritual world when you account for motion, and change therein from the intrinsic power of the word of God. That word, without any active interposition of Deity, and by its own appropriate powers enlightens the mind, commands belief, determines the will, confers moral power, and in a word, regenerates, sanctifies, and comforts the soul—you clothe it with omnipotence, you more than deify it, and in the rapidity of your devotion to a theory, exalt it above the light of Heaven and the glory of God, and the Lamb who lighten the place. Are you startled at the boldness of

the charge?—Remember when, that you have said, that when admitted into the view of the understanding, "it is the *highest, the most coercive, and irresistible cause* of believing in the universe." Heaven, and God with all his ineffable splendor, are not so luminous, so irresistibly convincing as the word. Deity has exhausted himself, he is shorn of his brightest beams in this display of truth. If these philosophers have snatched creating power and immediate agency from the hands of Deity to bestow it on all-generative matter, you have done no less in ascribing omnipotence to the word, and denying the agency of God in forming the new creation in the soul. Yes, sir, your scheme is nothing else than an impious Epicurizing in theology, which invests the subordinate cause or mean with the supremacy and agency, which properly belongs to, and can reside only in a First Cause. But agency, and still more omnipotent agency in a mean, is a solecism in nature or grace—a supreme almighty mean or instrument has no existence any where, nor can have.

Real philosophy would spurn the impiety of clothing any one of the agents of nature, such as air, electricity, or any other, with the character or energy of the cause of causes, for the production of any one effect whatever, and certainly you can show nothing like omnipotent means in scripture. There is something too, in your omnipotent mean which is really curious and singular—It is such only in certain circumstances—it can only put forth its almighty force when brought into contact with the sinner's mind—at a distance it either does not act at all, or acts inversely, inflaming the mind to malignity and opposition; and what is no less extraordinary, it is perfectly under the control of a poor being whose breath is in his nostrils—It cannot act; no, this omnipotence cannot act at all, unless a poor creature that crawls on the earth permits it—Thus by a curious and even impious inversion of things, the mean is elevated above God, and man above the mean!

We have already shewn that Christ had promised to be with his people alway even unto the end of the world—to be in the midst when two or three should meet in his name—to come again unto them, and that what he promised

he had actually fulfilled in the descent of the Holy Spirit, who has continued, and must still continue to represent the Saviour in the church. That he will be actively present with his people in a spiritual sense, for their growth in comfort and holiness is very plain from scripture; "I will dwell in them and walk with them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." The indwelling of the mediator is performed by the blessed Comforter; "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." The scriptures largely represent to us the work of a risen Jesus. Exalted a prince and saviour to give repentance and remission, he ever liveth to make intercession for us; he is our advocate before the eternal throne, and holds an active unchangeable priesthood; his right hand grasps the sceptre and subdues all things unto himself; he holds the keys of death and hell; opens and no man shuts, shutteth and no man openeth; he walketh among the golden candlesticks, and manages the affairs of his vast kingdom. How different all this, my dear sir, from the quiescent, indolent station assigned the Mediator in your scheme of religion. You allow he appeared in our nature, suffered, died, rose again, ascended his throne, and sent the spirit to reveal truth and seal it by miracles—but there you stop:—He has not done nor can he do any thing more than he has already done, according to the theory you advocate. No, he neither intercedes, sheds down blessings, nor operates any thing in order to our salvation.

Thus it is, that you prostrate a great part, and a very important part too, of his mediatorial work—You sap the great doctrine of his active, energetic reign in the world of grace, or in the hearts of men, and in its ruins I see involved in one common destruction the doctrine of a particular providence. Will you say he governs mediately—rules the worlds of nature and of grace by means—say too, that he made the worlds by means, and it will appear how indefensible your opinion really is. It is no less the doctrine of sound philosophy than of revealed truth, that the same power which reared the mighty fabric of the universe, with all its immensity of worlds, and

systems of worlds, has operated ever since to hold it up, preserve its motions, arrange and direct its tendencies.

You cannot conceive of present existence nor motion, any where, either in the animate or inanimate parts of creation, on any other principle, than that of the cause which first produced it. Motion is an effect requiring some adequate cause for its production; continued motion is no less an effect, and requires a continually operating cause to support it. In vain you resort with the half-sighted Epicurean to an original impulse, to gravitation, affinity, electricity or animal appetency—in vain you recur to the laws of mechanism to solve the phenomena of life and motion, or the operations of nature. The same sublime cause which gives being and motion to the immense whole of God's works, does still operate for their preservation and direction—"For by him were all things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers, all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and *by him all things consist* [subsist.] And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in him." Col. 1. 16—20. Eph. 1. 10. Behold then the glories of the Son of God! He is the creator of the stupendous universe, whether material or intelligent, whether animate or inanimate, whether visible or invisible.—From the tall spirits around the throne down to a worm, through the entire gradation of being, through every form of sense, intelligence or reason, he is the author, and efficient support of all life, motion and existence; in him they live, are moved and have their being: for of him, and *through him*, and to him are all things." Rom. 11. 36. And this very

scripture teaches us (for that is its proper meaning) that his empire of grace is not less extensive. He is the head of his body, the church. He is the author, the source of life, motion and activity to all the souls his blood has ransomed. He supports them every moment, and is conducting them to a destination of superior glory and joy. And while he is thus the source of all influence and grace to his church, he is pouring a tide of life, animation and joy throughout his vast unmeasured dominions; he sheds his compassions and select influence upon all his pure intelligent creation. He is gathering together all things into one. His cross, in which the law and the divine perfections have their richest display, while it forms the ransom of our lost world, becomes indirectly the centre of influence, felicity and union to all orders of intelligent creatures. His blood and risen power unites our dissevered world to the harmonics of the universe, opens new sources of felicity and joy to millions of worlds, confirms their obedience, establishes their happiness and glory for ever, and thus becomes the cement, the reconciling band to all worlds.

Such, sir, is the lofty doctrine of the Bible, a doctrine which is supported by sound philosophy and all legitimate analogy; but Oh! how unlike the gloomy, comfortless one you have recommended to us. Gloomy and comfortless indeed is that scheme which denies immediate, efficient energy and direct interposition to the King of Kings, in supporting and controling all things—Were it realized for one moment the universe would be in ruins;—wild uproar and confusion would commence their lawless reign, and all, all would be disaster and chaos. Believe me, sir, your plan would snatch away the firm column that supports the worlds of nature and grace—the sure prop which sustains, derived, dependent existence; the power which subdues all things to God, regulates, disposes, and controls all things, diffuses light, felicity and joy through every part of his vast dominions, and let the amazing, the stupendous whole which that power supports, beautifies and adorns, drop into universal chaos; it would, by elevating second causes, at the expense of the effecient

operation of the Redeemer, and a particular providence, leave us nothing but a prospect of ruin and despair.

From a state of things so dreary, so cheerless, so horrible, the mind recoils with terror, and flies to the sanctuary of that divine philosophy, which gives us the assurance of protection, comfort and repose, in the incessant agency of Israel's God, who slumbereth not nor sleepeth—to the dear, the exulting hope, that "a Godhead reigns."

Such, my dear sir, are my views of your opinions, both with respect to their claim to truth, and their practical tendency. How you will receive them, is not for me to know, nor do I feel any solicitude farther than that I could wish they might lead you to examine solemnly and candidly those great and awful questions of theology, and ultimately to form a more just and scriptural decision concerning them. Whatever notice you may take of these letters, or whatever turn this controversy may take in future, there is one thing at least I could wish, for our own sakes and the world's, we might never forget, and that is, the holy charity of our gospel. To use the language of an eloquent preacher of the old school, "let us express this sweet harmonious affection in these jarring times: that so, if possible we may tune the world into better music. Especially in matters of religion, let us strive with all meekness to instruct and convince one another. Let us endeavour to promote the gospel of peace, the dove-like gospel, with a dove-like spirit. Let us *follow truth in love;* and of the two indeed, be contented rather to miss of the conveying of a speculative truth, than to part with love. When we would convince men of any error by the strength of truth, let us with all pour the sweet balm of love upon their heads"—Cudworth.

With sentiments of sincere friendship,

And prayers for your welfare,

I am yours.

BARTON WARREN STONE

Pathfinder of Christian Union

A Story of His Life and Times

BY

CHARLES CROSSFIELD WARE

with Introduction by

ELMER ELLSWORTH SNODDY

Illustrated

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§3

Stone said that in 1796 Nashville "was a poor little village hardly worth notice." In the census of 1800 it had 346 people. Settlements were grouped about it, mostly to the north in Davidson and Sumner Counties. One of these, Mansker's Creek, in Sumner County, twelve miles northeast of Nashville, was of peculiar interest to Stone. He said that he and Anderson often preached there to "respectable and large assemblies, from a stand erected by the people in a shady grove." Backwoods hecklers came, but the preachers were encouraged by strong community support and prevailed.

Five miles north of Nashville, at Spring Hill lived Thomas B. Craighead, with whose name Barton Stone was to be associated later by John Poage Campbell, for the "heresies" of the "Newlights." He was a brother of Rachel Craighead Caldwell. He had been the first located preacher in the Nashville district, coming from North Carolina through Kentucky in 1785. Ten years before Stone's coming he had opened Davidson Academy in the "neat stone church" called Spring Hill.[2] This academy evolved into the University of Nashville. The site of the academy is in the edge of the present Spring Hill cemetery on the Andrew Jackson Highway. A traction line runs beside it. Noth-

[2]Sprague's *Annals*, Vol. 3, p. 589.

[3]*First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, Tenn., Centennial*, 1915, p. 47.

ing remains on the site but a cone of the rock used originally in the old church, set into a simple memorial six feet high. The old building used for both church and school was in dimensions twenty-four by thirty feet. Here Craighead preached and taught for more than thirty years.

He was the son of Alexander Craighead of old "Suga Creek" in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. He graduated at Princeton in 1776, and was ordained by the Orange Presbytery in 1780. In the same year he married Elizabeth Brown of Frankfort, Kentucky. Near to the site of the old Spring Hill Church is Craighead's grave. The inscription states that he lived from 1750 until about 1825, and that he was "a man of fine talents and capable of close thought," and that "he did the cause of religion much service." He had become reconciled to his Presbytery before his death. Heresy hunters did not write the words on his tomb.

John Anderson talked of Kentucky to Stone. They were both ready to go hence after a final service at Craighead's church. It was planned that Anderson should preach on this special occasion. There was a large congregation of the community's élite. His theme categorically was "Holiness is a moral quality." He could do no more than to state twice his proposition in the five words of his theme. No other words would come; he was stopped by self-consciousness. But Stone observed that it was a great sermon. His colleague's five-word message was a dynamic for new thought by Stone on the current Presbyterian theology as to original sin and regeneration. This as it appears in Stone's autobiography was a naïve retrospect. It

was his comradeship with Craighead which three years later encouraged Stone to make his evangelistic appeals rational and scriptural, as they thought.

§4

Stone continued to be greatly agitated in soul. He was trying to get a rational grip on the doctrines of the Westminster Confession. He said: "Often when I was addressing the listening multitudes on the doctrine of total depravity, their inability to believe—and of the necessity of the physical power of God to produce faith; and then persuading the helpless to repent and believe the gospel, my zeal in a moment would be chilled at the contradiction." He wrestled long with a Calvinism which he could not solve. The struggle was intense. He said: "Sweat profusely burst from the pores of my body and the fires of Hell gat hold on me." His relief was in the reconstruction of his faith and message "by the precious Word of God."

[8]Moore, M. H., *Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia*, p. 245.

[9]Bennett, W. W., *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, p. 422.

His friend John Poage Campbell labored to retain him for Presbyterian orthodoxy. Stone thought independently but needed sympathy. There were others in a like struggle. With one of these, Thomas B. Craighead, of Tennessee, he became intimate. Craighead revealed his long matured thought on "regeneration," in a sermon printed in a pamphlet shortly after the Revival. He said: "Christ's manner of preaching is out of fashion at the present day. You hear nothing from him of the current cant—Pray to God to give you faith to believe—pray, pray, strive, agonize, wait until Christ comes and delivers you."[10] He concluded: "Now as the understanding is the seat of all moral power, truth is the great principle of moral amendment. The Spirit of God is therefore offering himself to us as a teacher to lead us into all the truth, and to explain to us his whole will for our salvation."[11]

This doctrine of Craighead was very objectionable to John Poage Campbell, to whom Craighead was a "Pelagian." Campbell said Craighead had ruined Stone with this heterodoxy. It was charged that in turn Stone had seduced McNemar with Craighead's teachings. Campbell aired these charges in a pamphlet against Craighead appearing after Stone had led off the Christians. He told how that in his travels with Stone he had remonstrated with him but without avail. He then presented several certificates to support his contention that Stone was the theological echo of Craighead. In these Samuel M. Waugh said for

[10]Craighead, Thomas B., *Sermon on Regeneration*, p. 15. The only copy of this I have seen is in the University of Chicago Divinity School Library.

[11]*Ibid.*, p. 93.

Campbell: "Mr. Stone in 1800, virtually denied the agency of the Spirit, inasmuch as he said, that faith was prior to regeneration in the order of nature—that we never received the Spirit until we believed the Spirit was in the truth, and through the belief of that truth we were sanctified—he also said that God had done all he could for mankind, until they believed."

John Hopkins said for Campbell: "About two years previous to the revival of religion in this country, Mr. Stone informed me of Mr. Craighead's ideas of faith and regeneration, as they are now stated in Craighead's pamphlet, which he said he received from said Craighead. . . . Shortly after the revival began in Concord Congregation, Mr. Stone began to preach the following doctrine . . . that faith in the order of nature is antecedent to regeneration, that regeneration is effected by the influence of divine truth, and believed that no other agency is necessary, nor at all calculated to affect the moral powers of man, yet admitted that the Spirit of God is necessary to give the mind such a view of the divine truth as is essential to believing; which doctrine he continued to preach until a few weeks prior to the second session of the Synod in Lexington, at which time he openly denied any immediate divine agency, either in faith or regeneration, and said it had been his sentiment for two years past . . . and the reason he did not plainly preach it was, we were not able to bear it; for this cause he had fed us by piece meals.

"When he was charged with denying the operation of God's Spirit, he replied, that believers did receive the spirit, which was inseparably connected with the

word, urging the following text: 'The words which I speak unto you they are spirit and life.' "

John Lyle of Paris, Kentucky, said for Campbell: "I recollect that in the time of the very large meeting, at Cane Ridge, which took place shortly after the late revival began in the upper counties of this state, that Matthew Houston, who is now a Shaker, and I, were walking by ourselves in a wood; that Mr. Houston observed to me that the doctrine I had been delivering on that occasion, viz., that conviction of sin and conversion to God, were effected by the operations of the Divine Spirit, etc., would be very unacceptable. I inquired why. He said that Barton W. Stone, and Richard M'Nemar had got what they called a new gospel, which consisted in delivering the testimony of God without any operation of the Spirit attending the word. M. Houston said a good deal about this system at Cane Ridge, and afterwards on other occasions. I recollect he stated to me Mr. T. B. Craighead's reasons in favor of this new gospel, which reasons I understood Houston had received from Craighead's own mouth. And I believe that Houston gave me to understand that both M'Nemar and B. W. Stone had received this new doctrine from Mr. Thomas B. Craighead."[12]

Campbell concluded by calling Craighead "The grand Heresiarch of the West," and charged that he had corrupted Stone and his co-workers. The argument of Campbell would have more weight if Stone had opposed "the Great Revival," as Craighead did,

[12]These "certificates," offered by John Poage Campbell, to support his thesis that Stone was heterodox, are found from pages 57 to 67, in Campbell's pamphlet, *Pelagian Detected*, printed, Lexington, Kentucky, 1811. A copy is in Transylvania College Library, Lexington.

to say nothing of their other radical differences; but since Stone was a leading figure in the Revival it is obvious that he thought independently and acted tolerantly.

Henry Smith, a Methodist, in his *Recollections and Reflections of an Old Itinerant,* claimed that Richard McNemar, at the suggestion of John Poage Campbell, had heard William McKendree preach near Maysville, Kentucky, and was thus led to abandon Calvinism and to preach that sinners had universal freedom of will to believe. McNemar got emotional results. Smith said: "To the congregation this was a strange work, but not so strange to the Methodists."[13] McNemar was an enthusiastic leader in the initial phases of the Revival in north central Kentucky.

§5

In the fall of 1800 Stone visited Virginia and North Carolina. Returning to Kentucky, he was accompanied for a part of the way by James Hall, of Iredell County, North Carolina, who was going as a synodical missionary to Natchez, Mississippi. They were met by messengers from Shiloh Church in Tennessee, having letters for Hall. These letters reported the meetings recently held at Shiloh at which the phenomena of "the Great Revival" first appeared in that state. Leaders from Shiloh had attended McGready's meetings of the preceding summer in Logan County, Kentucky, and had brought to their home church the Revival's infectious enthusiasm. Stone said that Hall was overcome by the news and "burst into a flood of

[13]Smith, Henry, *Recollections and Reflections of an Old Itinerant,* p. 53.

tears." This was their first information of "the Great Revival."

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Craighead, T. B. 1750?-1825.
A sermon on regeneration

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